

IKONIKA VIRGO SCUBA DAVINCI HOLY FUCK JAMES BLAKE JAN JELINEK

# XLR8R

133  
MAY/JUNE  
2010

ACCELERATING MUSIC & CULTURE

XLR8R.COM



THE  
**Q+A**  
ISSUE

## Ariel Pink

THE LO-FI POP SAVANT  
FLESHES OUT HIS SOUND  
WHILE WARPAINT PICKS  
HIS BRAIN.

Brackles  
vs. Shortstuff

Juan MacLean  
vs. Virgo

Ikonika  
vs. Flying Lotus

Deadbeat  
vs. Scuba

Jan Vormann  
vs. Sébastien Preschoux

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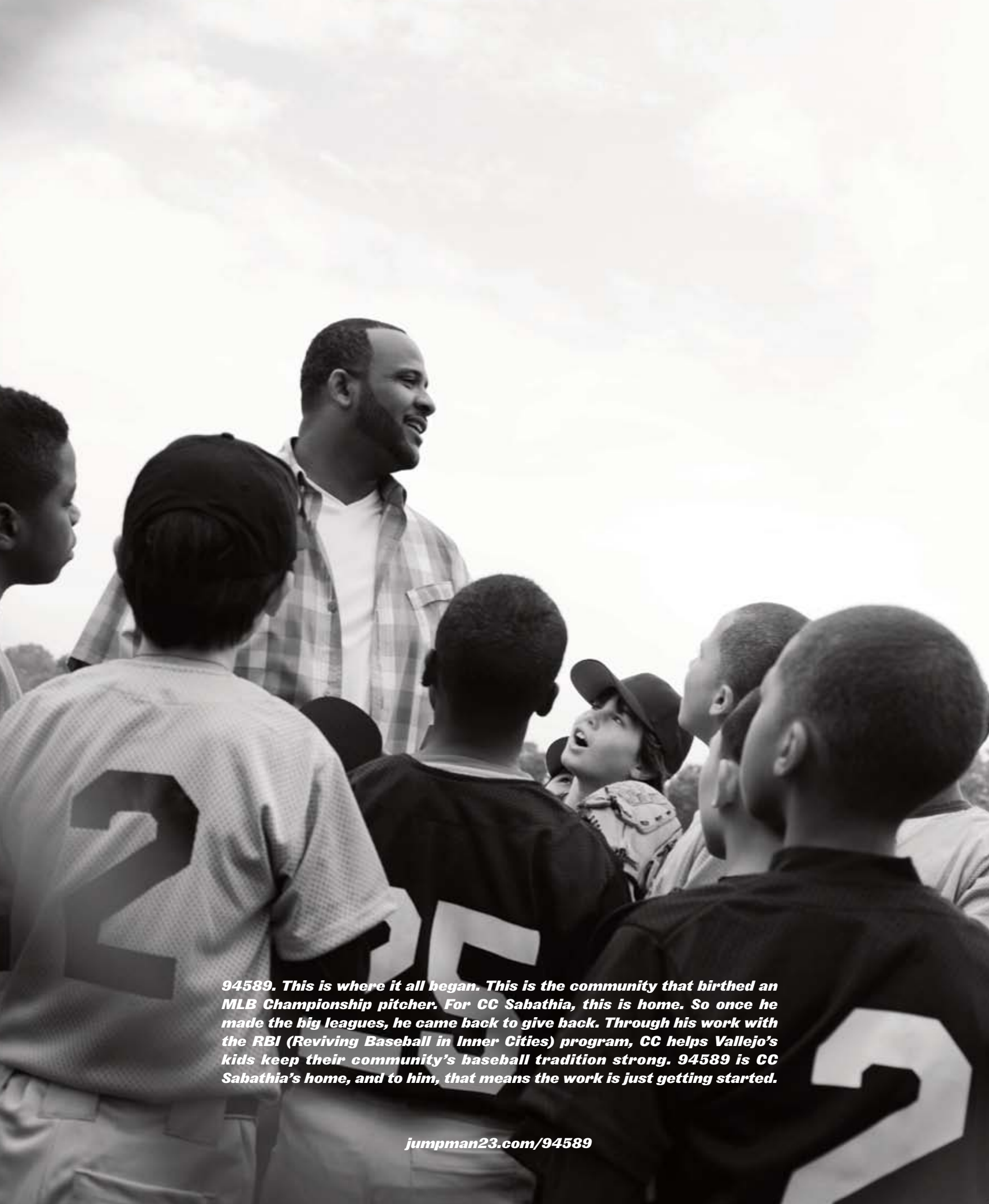
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***BECOME LEGENDARY***

## ED'S RANT RE: THE ED'S RANT EMAIL INTERVIEW



KEN TAYLOR PUTS SHAWN REYNALDO IN THE HOT SEAT.

**Ken Taylor:** Shawn, I was thinking of doing Ed's Rant as an interview, too... what say? Obviously, the answer is yes, cuz Tim and I have already decided it. So, tell us about SXSW and WMC... good times?

**Shawn Reynaldo:** Well, SXSW was amazing. 2010 was maybe the best year ever for electronic music there, as it seemed like every DJ we ever liked was there and hanging out. WMC, on the other hand, is like hanging out in the Ninth Gate of Hell. Miami is like the worst parts of LA plus Eurotrash and Guidos. Seriously, the only things maintaining my sanity are the Cuban food (amazing) and my ability to constantly bitch on Twitter.

**Speaking of your Twitter feed, Ethan and I devised a drinking game around it. Every time you post something about shitty tattoos or piercings, I have to do a shot; if you post about bad clothes, Tim does one; if you post about something you overheard an idiot say on the street, Ethan does one; and anything about Lamborghinis, that's Andrew's turn. What should Kerry and Sally drink to? (Also, are you currently hanging poolside while a DJ in a fedora plays shitty electro-house bangers to no one?)**

Maybe Kerry could do a shot every time I mention exorbitant prices and Sally could take one every time I mention haircuts. I'm not poolside, but I am at a depressingly swanky mega-club. The highlight of the party was the key lime pie I bought across the street.

**So, how are you feeling about this issue so far?**

Pretty good. We're actually meeting our deadlines (for a change) and the interviews so far have all turned out nicely. I'm a little miffed that the LCD Soundsystem interview fell through, or better said, never materialized. Maybe his PR company thinks we're small potatoes or something... they're probably doling out hand jobs to anyone they can find at *Rolling Stone* pleading for a cover story, but we all know where the O.G. LCD supporters are. Luckily we got his pal Juan MacLean to step in and chat with Virgo. And who wouldn't want to talk to Virgo? Marshall fucking Jefferson is involved. It's like, "Hey Marshall, remember when you helped invent house music and made like a bajillion amazing records? What was that like?" But it's cool, I'm sure James Murphy would much rather talk to another magazine about his top five favorite MGMT songs and how disco-punk changed the world.

**Actually, shit, I meant to tell you that this Virgo is a different Virgo [read the feature for a clearer explanation...]. Not the one with Marshall Jefferson or Adonis. Oops... man, fucking discogs.com gets stuff mixed up all the time. Anyhow, these dudes are rad, too, and while they maybe didn't invent house, they're solid Chicago guys from way back who played a serious part. And Juan MacLean seems excited about it, so that's cool.**

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Ariel Pink, shot in Los Angeles by Julia Galdo

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### CORRECTION:

Last issue's Natalie Storm photograph was shot by Peter Dean Rickards.

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STEVEN ELLISON



As Flying Lotus, former XLR8R cover star Steven Ellison has staked claim to just about every forward-thinking electronic music sub-genre in existence—and continues to lead the charge for leftfield-leaning beats from the US. This past April, Ellison sat down and chatted with his friend, Hyperdub newcomer and London dubstep producer Ikonika, about her rebellious rise to the top. Flying Lotus' third album, *Cosmogramma*, is out May 4 on Warp.

flying-lotus.com

JOHN MACLEAN



A former member of Sub Pop band Six Finger Satellite, New York's John MacLean currently fronts The Juan MacLean, with whom he slings '80s-leaning house and disco for the DFA camp. This month, he donned his journalist cap and quizzed Merwyn Sanders of Chicago house legends Virgo on the duo's dance-music history and recent reemergence. MacLean's latest disc, a mix for the illustrious *DJ-KICKS* series, is out now on !K7.

thejuanmaclean.com

EMILY KOKAL



Emily Kokal grew up on the West Coast with her mom and sister, playing make-believe, drawing, eating good food, and spending time outdoors. These days, she travels around playing music with her friends and finishing up her band Warpaint's first LP. For this issue of XLR8R, she conducted her first-ever interview, with cover star and fellow Los Angeles musician Ariel Pink. Warpaint's *Exquisite Corpse* EP was released last year on Manimal Vinyl.

myspace.com/worldwartour

SCOTT MONTEITH



Dub-tech producer Scott Monteith left Montreal for Germany in 2007, and soon rediscovered his love for techno after immersing himself in Berlin's club scene. For this interview extravaganza, Monteith, who records and performs as Deadbeat, met up with fellow expat Paul Rose (a.k.a. Scuba) to talk about their respective big moves, the even colder weather, and what's happened to their music since relocating to Berlin. Deadbeat's mix, *Radio Rothko*, is out now on The Agriculture.

myspace.com/deadbeatcomputermusic

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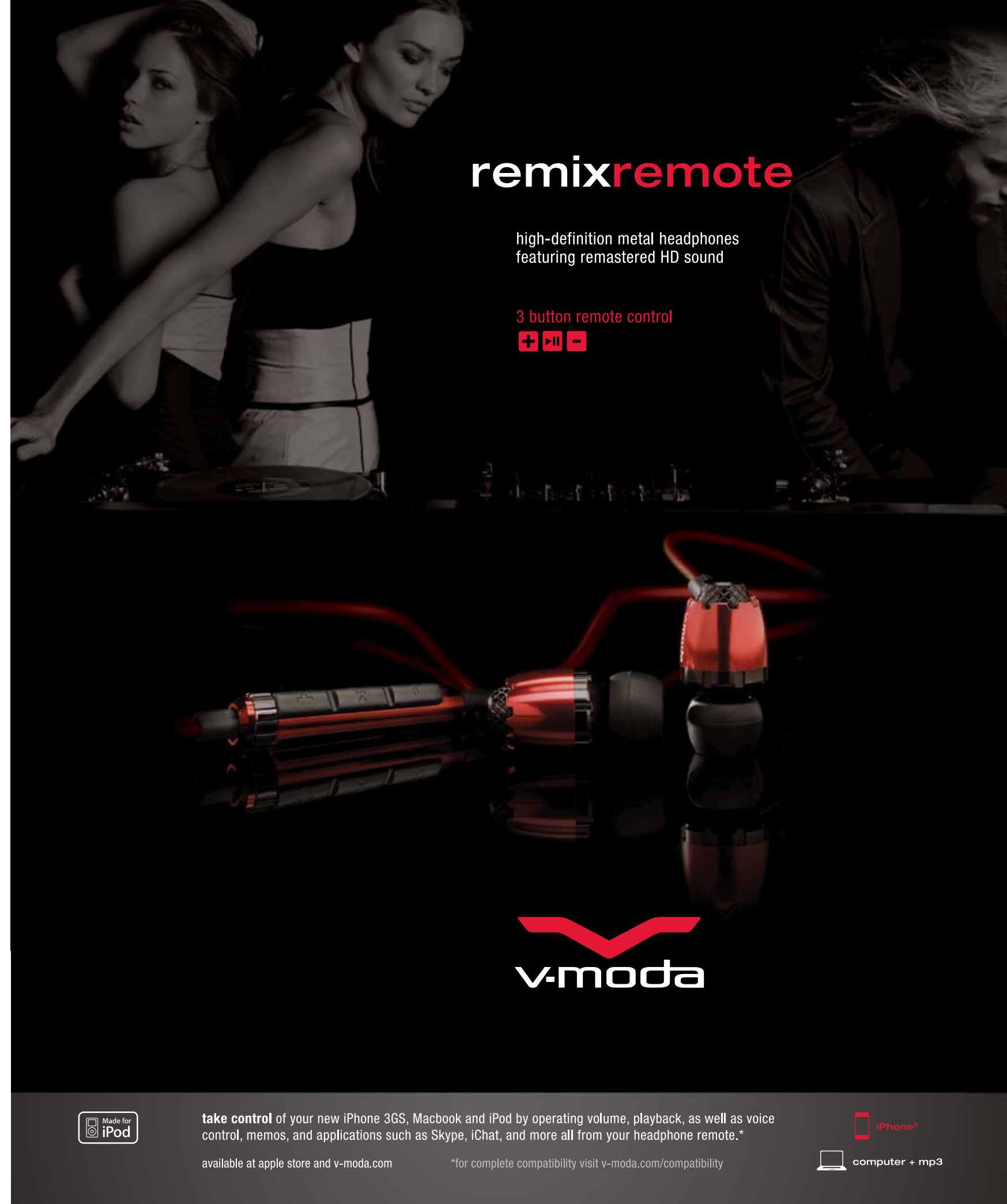


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## What's new at XLR8R.com

Exclusive music, videos, news, and extras from your favorite artists uploaded daily.

### PODCAST



#### DAM-FUNK, BEN UFO, DEADBOY, KYLE HALL

If you've had the opportunity to catch **Dam-Funk** in the live setting, you know that the man born Damon Riddick not only rocks the seven-inches, but he kisses them with the sweetest of soulful croons—and then shouts out the label info and year of release for just about every track. Expect a history lesson and then some from his upcoming podcast for *XLR8R*. Then check the latest from Detroit house upstart **Kyle Hall**, and UK two-step-funky-bass boys **Ben UFO** and **Deadboy**.

Get your dose of can't-miss hotness and sign up for our weekly podcast at XLR8R.com, where we feature exclusive mixes from all across the spectrum, including new sets from Dubbel Dutch, Strategy, Ghetto Division, Schlachthofbronx, and more.

[XLR8R.COM/PODCAST](http://XLR8R.COM/PODCAST)

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#### MAY / JUNE NO.133

Audio from our interviews with Deadbeat, Scuba, Ikonika, Virgo, and more

Music from DaVinci, Trailer Trash Tracys, James Blake, and more

An episode of *XLR8R TV* with Flying Lotus

Holy Fuck's full list of studio gear

Audio and video from The Crepes' Five Star

[XLR8R.COM/133EXTRAS](http://XLR8R.COM/133EXTRAS)



#### MARCH / APRIL NO.132

Music from Oneohtrix Point Never, Kyle Hall, Anthony Shakir, and more

A tour of Barcelona with Delorean on *XLR8R TV*

Daptone Studios' full list of studio gear

Video from Xiu Xiu's Artist Tips

Audio from Todd Edwards' Extended Mix

[XLR8R.COM/132EXTRAS](http://XLR8R.COM/132EXTRAS)

## XLR8R'S "YOU VS. YOU" CONTEST

INTERVIEW YOURSELF AND SNAG SOME AWESOME NEW ALBUMS AND TWO VOLUMES OF THE *ARTIST MUSIC JOURNAL*!

Wonderful things can be revealed when creative minds come together in a room to chat about their respective crafts. It provides a look into an unknown realm that rarely reveals itself in the regular day-to-day. Obviously, we're pretty into artists interviewing other artists throughout this issue, so much so that the concept has even permeated this here contest. What's within you that has yet to be seen? Is there another side to you that no one knows? We'd like to find out.

Pose five questions to yourself, and spill the beans for us. Delve deep into your loves, hates, dreams, fears, and most embarrassing moments. Find out what makes you tick, or create an alter-ego to field the inquisition. The most interesting pieces will score copies of **Juan MacLean's** *DJ-KICKS* mix (IK7), **Christian Prommer's** *Drum Lesson*

*Zwei* (IK7), **Flying Lotus's** *Cosmogramma* (Warp), **Ikonika's** *Contact, Love, Want, Have* (Hyperdub), **Ariel Pink's** *Haunted Graffiti's* *Before Today* (4AD), a **Blunted Robots** grab bag of goodies, and volumes #07 and #08 of The *Artist Music Journal* series (Soundscreen Design) by Post Typography and Bjorn Copeland, respectively. Go deep and you just might win big!

**Five winners will receive each of the items listed above.**

Entries will be accepted via standard mail and email, and must be received by July 10, 2010. Send your entry to: XLR8R's You vs. You Contest 3180 18th St. #207, San Francisco, CA 94110 or email [contest@xlr8r.com](mailto:contest@xlr8r.com) with "XLR8R's You vs. You Contest" in the subject line.

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# 2010

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# JAMES BLAKE



WORDS MATT EARP

THE MOUNT KIMBIE COLLABORATOR AND SELF-PROFESSED JONI MITCHELL FAN USHERS IN DUBSTEP'S R&B-DRENCHED, LURCHING SUB-STRAIN.

On the phone from London, producer James Blake emits a calmness and an intense, focused passion for his craft that belies his 21 years of age. Part of a new breed of musicians making richly complex tracks under the ever-widening label of dubstep, Blake's take on the genre is utterly unique. Lurching, stuttering, and always saturated with harmonies (both sampled and created by his own voice), his tunes have strong R&B and classical elements without really sounding like either. With just a handful of songs under his belt, his buzz is palpable, and *XLR8R* took a few moments to catch up with him on his way from class to the practice rooms at London's Goldsmiths University, where he's finishing his degree.

**Tell me about your musical background.**

I started producing at university, so I've only been doing it for two years, but in terms of music in general, I've been playing piano and singing since I was five or six. I learned piano classically, and that really shaped me, because when you study classically you see things quite a different way—I took ideas from classical that I didn't really appreciate at the time, but now I see it as invaluable. Even though, alongside all of that, I was improvising and singing and listening to all sorts of music.

**Your tracks are remarkable because of the vocal elements in them that act as musical anchors. Can you tell us more about how you use vocals?**

Vocals have sentimental value—they always do with me—and I've always wanted to sample things that I already love. [Even the] R&B samples, they're not just any songs—they're still songs I loved when they came out, probably quite embarrassingly, I would have been afraid to admit it at the time, but nowadays those vocals really sit in your subconscious. And I think using them taps into a massive subconscious in our generation. But people don't just want to hear them straight; they want to hear echoes of them in their dance music.

**Echoes?**

I've always been a bit sensitive about sampling. I've heard lots of records where people just sample old funk records directly and they don't really change [the sample] at all, and for me I think I'd get the same vibe off of just listening to the original. It doesn't give you any sense of uniqueness. So I quite like to mask the identity of those samples, because otherwise I think, "Well, that would be too obvious." So, like, pitching vocals to sing new melodies, that's something that I always found fascinating, a sort of a Burial-esque technique—he was a massive inspiration. But also by juxtaposing my vocals with something like that, I'm sort of bringing myself closer to the original. I can almost feel like I'm singing with them.

**Your music is very hard to classify. Do you think of it as dubstep?**

I came from a completely different musical place before I started producing dubstep, but I did get heavily into it for a couple of years. And I think I'll always have one foot inside the dubstep scene even just through being influenced by certain artists, in the same way that I'll always be influenced by D'Angelo or Stevie Wonder or Joni Mitchell. A lot of people are quite sensitive to the use of the word "dubstep," and for a while I thought, "I'm really glad to be breaking out of this sound." But now I quite like being bundled in with it because when I think about the people that have gone before me and are making incredible music, like Mala... I still listen to his records... then great! I mean, I don't get associated with the massive tear-out wobble end of dubstep, I sort of get the nicer end of dubstep, so I'm happy with that.

**What's in the works for you?**

I've got two EPs coming on R&S. The first will focus on sampling R&B vocals that were buried deep in my subconscious. It's got a dancefloor feel, and there's a collab with Mount Kimbie on there, too. The second will draw from recordings I did recently of myself singing and playing piano—more introspective and personal. I'm also working on a vocal album of electronic production but of my (unadulterated) voice. It's pretty minimalist in vocal arrangement, and the production serves the voice, not the other way round.

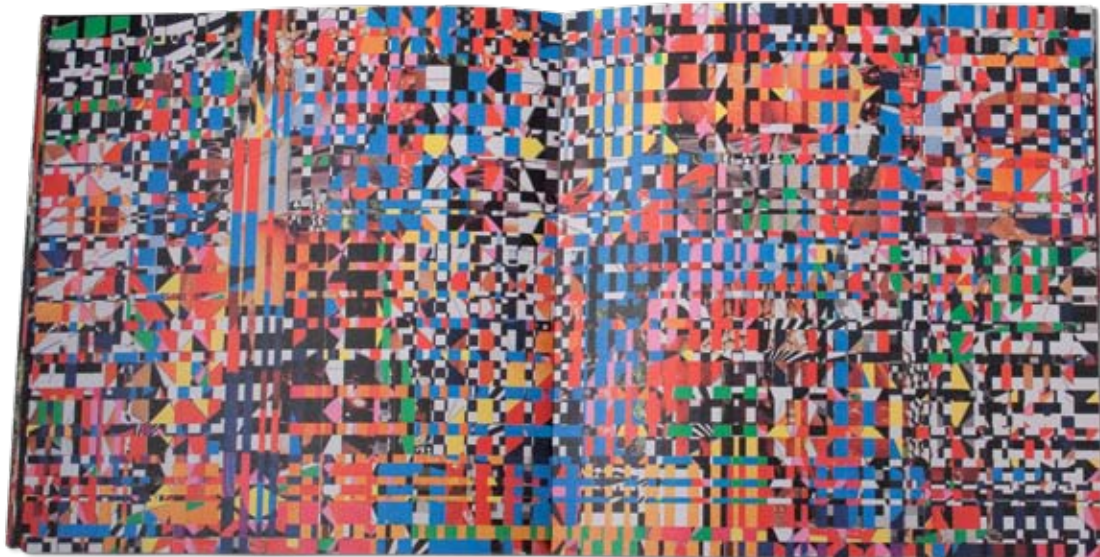
◊ JAMES BLAKE'S CYMK EP IS OUT NOW ON R&S. HIS DEBUT LP IS EXPECTED BY THE YEAR'S END. [MYSPACE.COM/JAMESBLAKEPRODUCTION](http://MYSPACE.COM/JAMESBLAKEPRODUCTION)





# POST DOCS

TALKING TRASH (CULTURE) WITH THE VISUALISTS BEHIND DOUBLE DAGGER AND BLACK DICE.



Last summer, Soundscreen Design debuted *The Artist Music Journal*, a limited-run book series. For each edition, a visual artist or musician puts together a 24-page book drawing inspiration from their connection to music. The two latest entries were made by Baltimore's **Post Typography** (a.k.a. Nolen Strals and Bruce Willen, also of the band **Double Dagger**) and **Bjorn Copeland**, founding member of experimental noise outfit **Black Dice**. Here, Post Typography quizzes Copeland on his involvement in the series, his process, and the effect of his small-town roots. *Shawn Reynaldo*

**Post Typography: What were you trying to create with your AMJ volume?**

Bjorn Copeland: I was basically trying to paint a picture of the way I see my relationship to art and music. **Black Dice** has a lot to do with that. It's been a 12-year project that has been the outlet for all of our

ideas. I tried to make as much new imagery for it as possible. There are a few older pieces that seemed to fit, so that's why they're there.

**Collage has been a part of punk and independent music since the beginning. Has this history had an influence on your own work, either in the choice to use collage as a medium or in the content?**

As soon as I got into music, I loved album artwork. That hasn't really stopped. Collage always appealed to me, especially all the Vermiform [Records] shit. I love the way their releases look. They all seemed to be snapshots of some bizzaro parallel world. It really colored the way I thought of the music. That seems like an opportunity that a lot of people shy away from.

**Do you see a connection in the way you approach your music and visual art?**

It's really the same to me. Even when I work independently from [my brother] Eric and Aaron [Warren, also in **Black Dice**], the things that we talk about when doing band shit resonates in my head, and is a huge influence. I've really tried to keep a cohesion between the two.

**Which books have been your favorites in the AMJ series so far?**

I really liked yours. It's fun to read. I kept searching for the poster you did for us, Melt Banana, and Heroin Sheiks at the Auto Bar. Remember that one? Maybe that was pre-**Double Dagger**. Still got that one. **Black Dice** has been talking about doing a flyer book with comment on each show. Not sure what I remember about a lot of them, but it seems like it would be entertaining to flip through.

**Though our visual output is really different, both of our**

**work references or borrows from low-rent pop culture. We all grew up in small towns where that was about the only kind of culture that was offered. What draws you to mundane objects/imagery as sources for your work?**

I really like using things that are so familiar that you are almost numb to them. I also treat that type of source material a lot less preciously. Since I make everything by hand, it's easy to fuck up in a way where you can't fix it. You know, you can't erase it, or unglue what you stuck together. I rarely go out and look for source material, I just sort of acquire shit over time. I love having a huge mess to work in. Wherever you look, you see something you glossed over before. The small-town culture you're talking about happens to be the stuff we all were exposed to the most growing up, so it seems like an honest starting point.

Post Typography's and Bjorn Copeland's *Artist Music Journals*, #07 and #08, are out now on Soundscreen Design. [soundscreendesign.com](http://soundscreendesign.com)



## HOW 42BELOW MET THE MARTINI

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## TRAILER TRASH TRACYS

ON THEIR FORTHCOMING ALBUM, THE STRIPPED-DOWN  
LONDON SHOEGAZE QUARTET ENTERS A WORLD OF ECHO.



Born in the midst of the last decade's dance-punk mess, London four-piece Trailer Trash Tracys sought to carve out a different kind of musical space using pared-down instrumentation, cavernous reverb, and moody pop nostalgia. The band's core members, Susanne Aztoria and Jimmy-Lee, have recorded a handful of precious, painstakingly crafted songs over the last three years, and were putting the finishing touches on their debut full-length—set for release in the fall—when we caught up with them at home.

**Your music is hardly trashy. How did you settle on that name?**

Jimmy-Lee: Susanne's from Gothenburg, Sweden, and she knew about this pretty trashy death-metal rock bar in Stockholm, Trailer Trash Tracy's. We took that name, and it was always supposed to be changed, but we never got around to it.

Susanne Aztoria: When you hear the name, you'll probably think of a completely different band, and we quite like that.

**What kinds of things do you consider in the songwriting process?**

JL: A lot of music out there's really got too much stuff going on. It gets messy. When we first started, we were getting set up with all these electro-punk-type bands. Whatever The Rapture or Interpol were doing with their bassline a few years ago, we decided to do the opposite. That's why we have just a few hits on the string. Because we're recording all our own stuff—and we're not great producers of any sort—we want things to be a bit bolder by keeping the basic framework minimal. We like everything to breathe a bit. We try to avoid keyboard and padding [because] the reverberation and echoes we use kind of fill that space.

**How do you know when a song is complete?**

SA: It never is! Even [our early single] "Candy Girl," to this day, we thought we would change.

**Your music reminds me of the Cocteau Twins. Am I horribly off-base?**

JL: That's Susanne's favorite band. I mean, when we started doing this project, we were listening to Cocteau Twins and other shoegaze bands, obviously. We were trying to focus on these bands and become our own band. These were the things that [excited] us at the time.

**Have you come across any comparisons to your music that you absolutely disagree with?**

JL: Some independent record shops say Glasvegas and Raveonettes. I don't mind The Raveonettes, but Glasvegas I mind.

**What do you hope the people listening to your music will experience/feel?**

JL: When we sit down to write a song, the music is reflecting me and Susanne, and how we are as people, I guess.  
SA: And the kind of world that we live in. It can be quite miserable!



Hear "Candy Girl" at [XLR8R.com/133extras](http://XLR8R.com/133extras).



# PUTTING IT BLUNTLY

SHORTSTUFF TAKES HIS BUSINESS PARTNER BRACKLES TO TASK.

The **Blunted Robots** catalog only runs three releases deep, yet label founders and former university mates Shortstuff (a.k.a. Richard Attley) and Brackles (a.k.a. Rob Kemp) have already left an impressive mark on London's hyperactive bass music scene. Curious about exactly what makes these boys tick and how things operate at Blunted Robots HQ, we let Shortstuff corral his partner out of bed and pepper him with questions about what goes on behind the scenes at their blossoming imprint.

**Shortstuff: Hello, Brackles. How are you doing?**

Brackles: All good, thanks.

**Did you get in okay (from your flight)?**

This isn't going in the interview, is it?

**Yeah, this is it.**

Okay.

**So, Brackles, you're one half of the team behind Blunted Robots. Talk me through your role in the label.**

I do considerably less than Shortstuff. I'm the ideas man. *Robot Dance*, that was me.

**Are they all pun-based ideas?**

Yes. This has become a bit like a job interview.

**I know all the readers are dying to know, which one of you writes the beats and who makes the little noises with their mouth?**

I think they're samples. Aren't they?

**What inspired you to start your own label?**

Having tunes that we thought were good, mainly. We wanted to take the credit for them.



FROM LEFT: BRACKLES, SHORTSTUFF, MARTIN KEMP

**Is Shortstuff as inspiring as he sounds?**

There's nothing more inspiring than Richard's bedroom at 1 a.m.... That sounded a bit gay.

**Bok Bok's "Citizens Dub" was an inspired choice for the third record. Did you purposefully choose an inferior record (Brackles' and Shortstuff's "Pipey D") for the b-side to make his seem better?**

It does seem like that, if you read the reviews.

**If you could choose any record ever to release on Blunted Robots, what would it be?**

Kraftwerk's "Pocket Calculator."

**Okay, why?**

It's just nice and camp, isn't it?

**Is that the criteria for a Blunted Robots release then?**

Yeah, nice and quirky and camp.

**Any plans to let Martin Kemp release his music elsewhere?**

Someone asked me that the other day, and I said no. It's all got to come out on Robots. I don't care if it holds him back.

**Do you feel as though you groomed him for 22 years of his life?**

Don't say "groomed"...

**...You've groomed him up all nice, and now someone else might come along and take a piece of the pie...**

Exactly... without tickling the balls. This shouldn't go in.

**Any hot new property with similarly silly names?**

No, I think all the names on the label are alright. My answers are a bit *Spinal Tap*, aren't they? I sound like that guy with the hats... Just not as funny.

**The label seems to have an extremely strong brand. Do you make any money with such fancy-pants sleeves?**

I think we always intended for it to be a strong brand. We knew Spam Chop was a talented designer, and I like the artwork. That's what we're all about...

**What, doing stuff that you like?**

No, cartoony stuff. We're not too serious.

**They're all quite camp aren't they, the robots?**

Yeah, like *The Bash Street Kids* [comic strip].

**I don't think *The Bash Street Kids* were anywhere near as camp...**

They're not that camp, are they?

**Your robot is quite flattering, whereas Shortstuff's looks like a fat little baby. Do you seek to undermine him at every turn?**

I had no input, so that must just be how Spam Chop perceives things.

**Do you have any plans to release yours and Shortstuff's solo stuff?**

Yeah, we do. But it's got to be shit-hot, though, and fit with the label.

**The stuff you shop to other labels isn't really cutting it, is it?**

No, I wouldn't put that shit out.

**What else do you have planned for Blunted Robots in the next few months?**



Martin Kemp is coming with another one of those things he does, with the weird noises...

**So it'll be hard to mix, with little *uuurrgh* sounds in the background, right?**

Yeah, tribal men. Probably enough of that actually. Cut that out after that release, Mart! After that there's our absolute club anthem, "Good Foundations," with Terrible Shock on the vocal. And then after that we've got a DJ Dom record.

**You've been grooming him too?**

No, Dom's a good lad. We knew him in Nottingham. He lives in New York now and makes really interesting, housey house music. We've got nothing planned after that just yet, but it'll probably take us a year and a half to get that lot out.

**Where's the hold-up? Who's the weak link in the chain?**

Well, it'd probably help if I got out of bed before 1 p.m. Although I've started getting up at 10 a.m. now. That's my goal.

**What are your strengths as a human and as a label owner?**

As a human, I have a good stride.

**Like (Footballer) Ryan Giggs? Do you pull your weight?**

I think I pull my weight.

**But you don't weigh that much, for a man of your height?**

No, I don't. Less than 11 stone in fact.

**That's a pretty low BMI.**

I think that's good, innit? I'm less likely to get heart disease.

**...and you don't eat a lot of meat.**

I don't eat any meat.

**You eat the meat of fish though, don't you?**

Fish meat, tofu meat.

**That's not meat. Last question... Which terms annoy you most when used in relation to Blunted Robots?**

Future Garage.

**Not Future Bass or Tropical Bass?**

No, I don't mind that so much. It sounds fun... like you could have a cocktail or something.

**Bok Bok feat. Bubbz's "Citizens Dub" b/w Brackles and Shortstuff's "Pipey D" is out now.** [myspace.com/bluntedrobots](http://myspace.com/bluntedrobots)

Check out Shortstuff's and Brackles' exclusive podcasts at [XLR8R.com/133extras](http://XLR8R.com/133extras).

# DAVINCI

A YOUNG CAT STRAIGHT OUT THE FILLMOE SIDESTEPS  
THE HYPHY HYPE—AND GIVES IT ALL AWAY.



PHOTO: KEN TAYLOR  
WORDS: ZONEIL MAHARAJ

Just a couple years ago, you couldn't chuck a thizz pill a few feet in the Bay Area without hitting a hyphy-rapping newjack. While there are plenty trying to recreate that carefree vibe, others realize there are realer issues to discuss. Rapper DaVinci (a.k.a. John DeVore) represents San Francisco's neglected Fillmore district. His debut album, *The Day the Turf Stood Still*, looks at gentrification and the changing faces of black communities, while reminding fans what raw rhymes and gritty beats sound like. Skinny-jean dance-rap this is not.

**Tell us about *The Day the Turf Stood Still*. Why the title?**

I came up with the title because I wanted to base the theme of the album around how the face of black communities nationwide has drastically changed over the years. I touch on gentrification and exactly how the people who are most affected by it have been forced to respond... I was born and raised in Fillmoe [San Francisco's Fillmore District], which was once considered the black Mecca of the West Coast. In the '60s and '70s, this was one of the only places on the West Coast where black people could come and actually have ownership. It was 95% black-owned

homes and businesses. The crack epidemic hit so hard in the '80s and '90s, Fillmoe was looked at as a slum. That was the era that I grew up in. From the '90s until now, I've seen our population shrink every year. This was fuel for me artistically.

**You rap a lot about economic survival, so why the hell would you offer *Turf* as a free download? The goal is to get paid, right?**

Yes! The goal is to get paid, but, realistically, I'm a new artist. Our goal at this point is to be viral. We just want people to hear the album, to earn their trust. We felt like the best way for people to hear it is to give the consumer the option to buy, or download it for free. The money will come later down the line. We believe in long-term fan investment.

**How would you describe your sound? I've heard people say you've got an East Coast flow, and your music's definitely not hyphy, which most folks assume of Bay Area hip-hop.**

I think people probably just say that because my choice of production, and I'm a little more lyrical and conceptual than most rappers from the Bay.

I describe my style as *thorobred*—it's deep, dark, rough, smooth, sharp, slick, and specific.

**A lot of rappers try to collaborate with better-known MCs and producers, yet you're pretty much the only voice on the record, with most of the production handled by SWTBRDS in-house producers AI Jieh and Ammbush. Why is that?**

We stuck with our in-house production just because we wanted the album to have a cohesive sound. So many albums these days are all over the map, but if you listen to all the classic albums from any genre of music, it's always one or two producers, like one production team. My producers... don't try to force a certain sound or a certain type of song either, which I think, in the end, made the album what it is. In terms of features, we didn't want to force anything, or get features just for political or business reasons. A lot of people do that these days and their album looks more like a compilation. This isn't about politics or business, this is about my music.

**GO**  
[Watch videos and hear tracks from \*Turf\* at XLR8R.com/133extras.](#)

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# GAME ON

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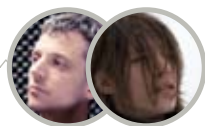
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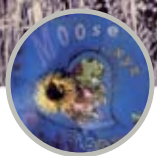
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# THE CRÊPES

GOTHENBURG, SWEDEN'S FREDRIK LINDSON DISCUSSES SOME OF THE RECORDS THAT INFLUENCED HIS POP SIDE-PROJECT WITH STUDIO'S DAN LISSVIK.



**Flowered Up**  
*Phobia*

I think this one was of the first records I bought as an aware buyer. Flowered Up was a very hedonistic band that was part of the Madchester scene—and made it even madder. It's like a secondhand Happy Mondays. I think the singer died of his own hedonism. Like Marc Bolan, sometimes the thoughts are bigger than how [the record] sounds.

**Moose**  
*...XYZ*

This is another Creation band that I really loved. ...XYZ, their first album, was more American-influenced, which has a pretty similar sound to what Crêpes try to achieve. A great band that's sadly forgotten.

**T. Rex**  
*T. Rex*

It's kind of boogie, but inspiration doesn't always come from how [things] sound—I think it's the thoughts of some artists that are inspiring. It's like The Fall or [T. Rex's] Marc Bolan: I don't always listen to it but when I think of them, I write songs. I have many favorites, but I like "Telegram Sam" because I used to be a postman.

**Razorcuts**  
*Storyteller*

Razorcuts came before the second wave of Creation bands, like Ride and the shoegaze scene. They're like a secondhand Byrds, and I think sometimes it's very inspiring when bands try to be something they aren't; it's very touching.

**U.N.P.O.C.**  
*Fifth Column*

When we started Crêpes, I had four of five songs that I brought with me to Dan's to try to capture what sound or what kind of band we should be, and this song was one of them. U.N.P.O.C. is a Scottish guy who only released one album. "Here On My Own" is very emotional and touching, and pretty DIY, and it makes you wanna do it yourself when you [hear it].

Watch *The Crêpes* on XLR8R TV at [XLR8R.com/133extras](http://XLR8R.com/133extras).



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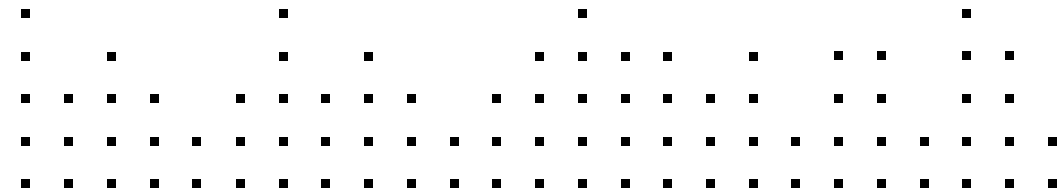
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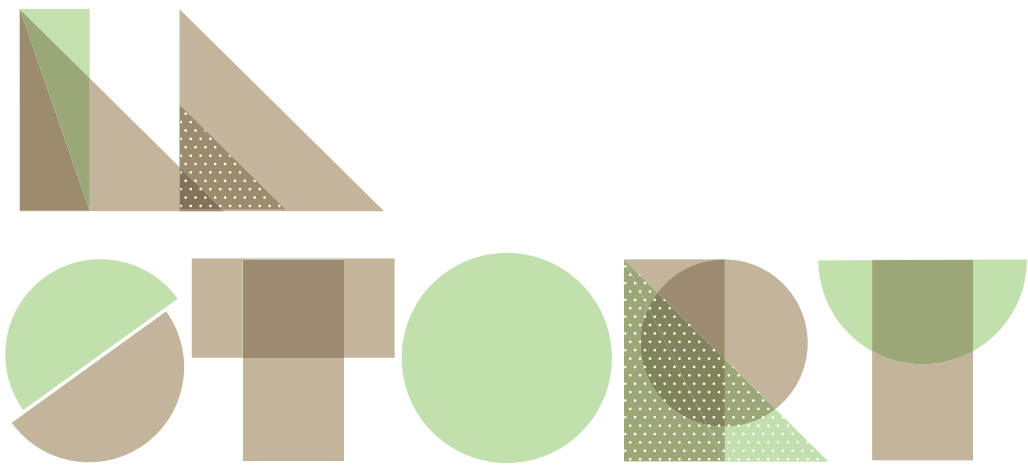
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FIRST CRUSHES, AND 10 DAYS OF SILENCE.



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●

Former home-recording maestro Ariel Pink has not only expanded his live and recorded line-up to include a full band, but he's also made the switch from the Animal Collective-curated Paw Tracks label to indie legend 4AD for his forthcoming record, *Before Today*. We had Warpaint's Emily Kokal, a fellow LA musician, talk with Pink about his new record—and just about everything that came before it.

**Emily Kokal: So you're from LA, and listening to this record (*Before Today*)—there's a real lightness to it, even though it's sexy and dark and haunted and all that. When were you born?**

Ariel Pink: June 24, 1978.

**If I was in LA when you were growing up, I would hope that the music sounded like your music.**

It did! Were you not raised here?

**I was raised in Northern California and Oregon.**

LA is one of those places that just had so much to offer musically that I wouldn't be surprised if you came across stuff like my stuff. It's the kind of thing that gets lumped with everything else, I guess.

**It's got a nostalgic feeling for a time I don't know. It's not something I recognize, it's just something I feel. I want to live in whatever the world of this record is.**

If you saw the cover art, the vibe of it is completely opposite to what you describe. It's a shot of us in a sort of urban Detroit ghetto or something—not a very breezy California vibe. That was more of a concerted effort on my part. I wanted it to be our East Coast album.

**It definitely has that dark element to it—I was dancing around to it this morning, and thought that instead of thinking of a bunch of questions I should just surrender to the music. Those basslines are so amazing! They just have a cool feeling to them. Kind of like Michael Jackson or something.**

Yeah, well, he's obviously held in high esteem! He was my first love when I was really, really, really young.

**Me too! He was my first crush.**

He actually came to my fifth birthday.

**No way!**

It was held at Roxbury Park and my parents hired somebody, an impersonator, to come, and at the time he was still black, so it was like... it was a girl, I think. It was one of the many practical jokes that my parents played on me.



"I FIND MYSELF TORN BETWEEN OBLIGATIONS AND ALL THE THINGS THAT I NEED TO DO TO BE CREATIVE."

**Sounds like they really love you.**

My mom also sent ET. I was a big fan, obviously! She must've paid one of her friends to get up in a brown sweatshirt and ET mask and come and pick me up at the house! She actually expected me to believe that it was ET. I saw the back of his mask and it said "Made in Universal Studios" or whatever. And I thought, "That's not ET!"

**Were you still happy about it?**

I think I died a little bit that day.

**When did you start playing music or know you wanted to make music? Was it something you planned on doing? Or did you have other plans for when you grew up, like being a marine biologist or something?**

I think the first thing I ever wanted to be, job-wise, was a veterinarian—that was when I was really young. I didn't think of myself as being a musician for most of my childhood. And I still have issues with that title, but I feel like I'm as much of a musician as anybody else, I suppose—I started writing songs around eight or nine years old, just writing lyrics down but with full arrangements in my head. But I never really fleshed them out on any instruments because I wasn't really encouraged to do that. I didn't have any obvious talent for any instrument. I was a visual artist; that's what my parents encouraged me to do because I obviously had the talent for rendering and all of that stuff. It wasn't until high school that I got fully sold on the idea that I would be a rock star.

**Do you remember what your first song was about?**

Yes, I still have it to this day. "Sexy Lady" was the name of the first song—I could sing it to you right now, but I'm not going to. A few of the songs in our set are, at this point, taken from those first songs that I did. I've always tried to keep tabs on everything that I've done ever since then. Most of it's gotten lost. I used to have a huge binder of every single song I'd ever written—lyrics and all that kind of stuff—but it got stolen or something when I was in high school. By then, I had already graduated to death metal. "Sexy Lady" was whatever was on the radio, very Billy Idol-sounding, "Dancing With Myself" kind of thing. It's actually very much of the time—when we do some of the songs now, I try to revisit how I envisioned them back then, because it was really of the time, influenced by music as it was unfolding, getting worse and all that stuff.

**It seems like a great idea to retain some of that energy from when you were first starting to discover your abilities.**

It coincides with music going astray with every year. At a very young age, I felt a conviction, like, "Wait, wait, I just got here!" It was better a year ago!

**There's a lot untapped from those time periods that can evolve from that place and get more interesting. I dunno if you listen to any of that Aphex Twin *Analord* stuff or any of what he did with 808 drum machines—sounds like new-school breakdance music.**

This is right before rhythm kind of took over everything; it was right there. I actually videotaped MTV broadcasts, and I put them in the tape player every now and again just to kind of remind myself. I taped *120 Minutes of the 100 Best Videos of All Time* kinda stuff, 1985, 1986. At the time, rap hadn't really just taken over yet, and the '80s were still kind of in Bruce Springsteen land, stuff like that. There was still a smidgen of the old rock 'n' roll in there, eventually to be fully replaced by heavy metal in my case.

**I was gonna say hair metal! You have disco, early '80s, what I was saying about your bass/synth lines—every line seems to have its own great melody, there's a conversation between the instruments.**

That's what it always is for me, even when it's just a rhythmic or sonic thing. It's always the interaction between the instruments, and the performances, and the sound qualities that really just contribute to make whatever it is that is a song or whatever you end up liking later on, like a recording of a song.

**In my band, since we are a democracy and we're all writing our parts together, a lot of work goes into trying to create conversation where nobody's speaking over each other, unless we want it to be that way. Do you record by yourself?**

For the most part... there's a good portion of the new record—I didn't record that all myself. This is the first record that the whole band... I don't play mouth drums, for instance. I used to produce and play everything on my own, and now I'm just trying to cultivate a real band dynamic, letting go of the rein. I know it's probably intimidating for a band to completely contribute freely, to say, "No, it doesn't go like that!" I can kind of trust them; they can pretty much read my mind.

**Does that make performing live more fun, to have the interaction of a band?**

That's precisely the point, that's exactly why I do play live at all. That's the only reason. If I had to perform live, which I do, and I had to do it all by myself, I'd hate myself and I probably wouldn't do it. This kind of makes me flex a different muscle.

**It's so fun to play live.**

It's a whole new chapter of my life. It's a real challenge. It doesn't come naturally. I pretty much started from not having any experience as recently as five years ago to now being a total veteran in my own eyes.



**Do you know (performance artist) Marina Abramovic?**

No, I don't know her.

**I was just recently introduced to her. She said something about how anything that makes you go after your insecurity, that's the place to push towards. That's how I felt about doing this interview. I've never interviewed anyone, don't feel like I always have that much to say... Thought, I'll just go for it. Always pushing yourself to the boundary to see more of who you are than you believed in your own identity.**

I'm one of those people that has always been spurned a little bit. Insecurity has been a very active motivator. The way I even got to the place where I would be able to pick up an instrument in the first place, it wouldn't have happened if I hadn't identified with much more degraded forms of music in high school. If I had stayed listening to heavy metal, I probably would have kept my distance: "Oh, I can't play that." Getting turned onto things that were more questionable artistic-ability-wise, aesthetically—that was very liberating for me. It gave me a world of encouragement and I identified with it, really got me to a place where I thought, "I can make my own *avant-garde* masterpiece," and sit down and grind it out on some tin pans or whatever.

**That's the discovery a lot of times, with a lot of the music I love and art in general and people: working with limitations and coming from a new angle. You can express yourself however it may be. Steve Vai is a technically amazing guitar player, but I wouldn't call him my favorite!**

I think a lot of musicians, they seem to be chasing after those kind of more... They're looking for the soul in music, they're not looking for the ability anymore. What makes musicians successful is that unnameable thing that makes it more than a three-chord thing, those kernels of memory, those things you grew up with.

**That human element.**

We live in a culture where the progress of hundreds of years of western tradition has gotten us to the point where we're pretty much celebrating the total dumbing-down of the age-old experiment of making progress.

**Do you have any daily practices or routines? I just saw this David Lynch documentary where he meditates every day and he's very involved in every little facet of his creation.**

I've got my routine, but it really doesn't even merit... it's just really, really boring and depressing stuff. It's not the artistic process—I'm not always doing that. At this point, I spend less and less time devoted to the artistic process because I find myself torn between a lot of obligations and all the things that

I need to do to eventually have that forum to be creative.

**Do you still do visual art? What other kind of creative things do you do?**

I draw enough to know that I can draw, but I'm not really concentrating on that. The songwriting process and the recording process—I don't force it anymore. I used to record as a necessary evil: "Good days, bad days, whatever, here it is!" It was a very desperate form of expression that needed to come out, come hell or high water. It didn't matter so much that nobody gave a shit—that was very, very vital to my early process of recording. Nowadays, I just wait. I sit around and something happens to crawl up my butt and say, "Write this down!" If I don't end up writing any music for a year, that's because I'm not inspired to do so.

**Are you comfortable with that now?**

Yeah, I am. For the sake of the quality of what's out there, I really don't want to contribute to a world of shit based on my own neuroses. There's too much shit out there. I've gotten the acknowledgment that I need to feel comfortable doing what I'm doing. Maybe that marks the end of me in some people's eyes, but that's perfectly fine with me.

**Sounds like you've found yourself. It's not the end.**

I'm 30 years old and, hey, so what?

**Do you have any other kinds of projects that you want to do before you kick the bucket?**

Yeah, totally! I'd love to, if I had it my way. They say that you can only do one thing your whole life, or maybe a couple of things. Ultimately, I'd like to be president. If I had that gig for four years down the road... sounds like a good job.

**It sounds like a heavy job.**

If I fuck it up, I won't go to jail. Get to pass it on and let somebody else fix it. The kind of thing you don't have to really plan for—it's a good thing to have off in the distance. It'll never happen, so what's the harm in fantasizing about it?

**What would your first plan of attack be?**

I would get rid of all the things I think are bullshit, as much as I can get rid of it. I'd do all sorts of terrible things to this country, but I'd probably heal the world at the same time somehow. It might be the dissolution of America, but it would be the unifying of the human race.

**There needs to be someone like that who can change everything.**

I'd have more faith in the system if someone like me could be president. If you have the confidence and you don't shrink from the opportunity of it... I've dealt with adversity and people hating my guts, that's





"ULTIMATELY, I'D LIKE TO BE PRESIDENT."

easy enough. It's just four years: not much of an obligation. It'd be like a little side job.

**Well, I believe in you.**

I also really love science and stuff like that. If I had another life, I'd probably be a scientist. If I were to dabble in science now, I think I'd be slotted in with pseudoscience because I don't know enough about it.

**Like quantum physics, kind of incorporating all of science and spirituality?**

I want to be strictly science, but I don't have the training to even begin to pontificate about it! If I were to come up with some sort of theory, it wouldn't get past peer review, and I'd be considered a total mindless hack. I don't know the actual equation for the mass of a proton so it would get in the way, and I wouldn't be taken seriously, and I would not want to participate if I was considered pseudoscience.

**I'm glad you got us here. One of my questions is that I feel like there are people that deny that death exists and there are people who have always known that they're gonna die. I wonder if people who live more fully are more conscious of the fact that they're mortal and people who deny death might be the lazier part of our society?**

I think that denying of death is the hardest thing for people to do. I think that people don't deny it enough. I think for some people it depends on definitions. As far as I'm concerned, I've lived forever, because I can't remember the beginning, chances are that I won't remember the end... it's always ahead of you. It's almost like the universe is blocked off from death. You never get to experience it at any point, even though you know it intellectually. I think the problem with humans, the biggest folly, is that we think, our words and our thoughts shape things that we think are real, that we live in a fantasy world. We don't acknowledge that, for instance... I think that words are basically satanic.

**I feel like I've created really deep and fulfilling relationships with people who don't speak English. A lot of the friendship is based on just being and experiencing together and relating to each other without words.**

If you've ever had a pet, same thing! Same thing, man. I feel like almost all animals speak the same language. The universal language of "DUH YEAHUG! Get away from me, argh! You smell good."

**I'm interested in that. I did a Vipassana (meditation) retreat where I didn't talk for 10 days.**

Was [my friend] Jimi Hey there?

**(laughs) No, he wasn't there that time.**

He's been trying to get me to go, I've always wanted to go.

**Jenn (our bass player) and I went, and it was interesting because we couldn't talk to each other. We learned a lot about where we're not completely comfortable with that silence with each other, because we couldn't talk to each other and we were around each other the whole time, the relationship of being near her without being able to express, "Hi, I love you. Are you okay?" I felt like I was ignoring her or abandoning her. There was a whole new relationship underneath the surface of how we normally communicate that wasn't as comfortable. I had a whole new reaction to how when you relate to other people, you come outside of yourself, you leave where you're really sitting in order to relate. There's some potential there for some really deep connection.**

Did this damage your relationship or bring you closer?

**It definitely brought us closer. I just had to deal with my own feelings, and it was great. In that silence, after 10 days of doing that, when we were allowed to start speaking again, that was the last thing I wanted to do.**

Wow, that's amazing!

**I felt, "Wow, I feel really grounded right now... I don't want to have to say anything." When I did start speaking, I've never experienced speaking so much from the heart. Everything that came out of my mouth was truly connected to how I was feeling. There wasn't really a glitch or a filter.**

Do you feel that you've been able to take that, aside from having a really memorable experience, do you feel that you were able to... I'm sure you've settled back into reality and you're back to square one again very quickly?

**It wasn't very quickly and because I don't practice the meditation as much as I used to. I definitely slipped back into my mind and believing in my thoughts... would even call it a laziness. But from that experience and other experiences I've had, I have more of a face. I know that the inner realms of me, I can always go into and there's reservoirs of untapped energy. I've learned that there's (a) place to go to get energy and to get peace. I think I really learned that if I'm ever really feeling depleted, I have the reservoir, the well inside.**

Ask the wishing well! I love that.

**I think that's a big part of how our band communicates, too. I don't know how it is to be in a band of all males, but to be in a band of all females—when we really hit our stride, we'll write a song and it'll go many places and it'll have many changes, and if we really trust it... we usually fuck ourselves up by trying to talk about it and explain to each other what we think. When we just let it go, it carries itself—we don't have to talk about it, and that has taught me a lot: that there's a lot more to be communicated and understood without trying to understand anything.**

Start from a single note, and however long it takes you to muster up the trust, you guys let it...

**Let it ride!**

Let it arrive when it arrives. You gave it the opportunity and the sum is greater than the parts. That's the definition of a band in my opinion, that's beautiful. ■



[Listen to this interview in its entirety at XLR8R.com/133extras.](https://xlr8r.com/133extras)

Ariel Pink's Haunted Graffiti's *Before Today* is out June 8 on 4AD. [myspace.com/arielpink](https://myspace.com/arielpink)

APPETITE FOR

DEPOSITION

FLYING LOTUS TALKS WITH **IKONIKA** ABOUT DRUMS, DRUGS, AND SMASHING SHIT UP.

MODERATOR KEN TAYLOR PHOTOS DAVID AXELBANK





With the release of her debut LP on Hyperdub, Sara Abdel-Hamid, the rebellious London producer known as Ikonika, wants to shake up dubstep with funky, R&B-dabbled rhythms and a punk ethos. Flying Lotus chats with her about her plan of attack.

**XLR8R: What do you guys think is the lynchpin between your two scenes?**

Ikonika: Well, London's always got this hardcore continuum going on, and we very much love our bass music, but, I dunno, I think the bpm [between the scenes] is a lot different. Like 130-140, just in terms of dubstep, I guess. But you guys have always had hip-hop, and we've always had, like, garridge.

**Flying Lotus: And drum & bass and stuff.**

I: Yeah, drum & bass and all that kinda stuff. But I grew up on American R&B and hip-hop, so I guess that combined with garridge has led to a particularly London sound.

**FL: It's funny, I think of those same exact things, and I think that the drug culture has a lot to do with the sounds.**

I: Yeah, I think you guys are all about the drums and we're all about the bass.

**FL: No, I'm talking about drugs, like ecstasy!**

I: Oh, *drugs!* [laughs]

**FL: Yeah, the drug culture is so different in London, like, the party scene is so different, it definitely lends itself to more uptempo stuff. The whole rave thing never really took off (here) like it did over there. The drug influence definitely played a part in the music and the sound that was coming out of (the UK rave scene).**

I: Definitely. I guess, back in the day, it was illegal to rave, and everyone threw these warehouse parties and stuff. Obviously, I was too young to do that, but that's probably carried on, and I think a lot of kids these days, when I go to clubs, they just seem, like, totally on Ketamine all the time, and cocaine. And we've had the smoking ban recently as well, which kind of changed things.

**FL: I don't even think people think about that kind of shit. But the whole drug-taking culture plays such a part in the sound. That's why, I think, LA people make slower music, cuz we're all stoners over here.**

I: You've got better weed out there?

**FL: Yeah, we're known for our weed shit, and it's like, "Okay, you come over to Cali, Ikonika. You come over here and chill with us for like two weeks, I think you'd understand why we make the stuff we do."**

**XLR8R: How did you two meet?**

**FL: Didn't we meet at Plastic (People)?**

I: I first met Flying Lotus at FWD>> when he was playing, and I didn't know who this American guy was hanging out with us, asking for weed [laughs]. I think you were one of the first people to play [my track] "Please" as well.

**FL: Yeah! That's right. I love that tune. It's pretty funny cuz I didn't know who you were either. I think I was just trying to get high in the corner.**

I: When your beats started to circulate though the UK and through London, people were really excited, particularly in the dubstep scene. Why do you think that was?

**FL: I was surprised. I played this show with Kode9 on Rinse FM and it was really crazy. I didn't expect it to go down the way it did, you know, considering Rinse FM was such a weird little nook, like in a library or something like that. It was the strangest setting; it was just like a really bright room that looked like a place you'd teach special-ed kids or something.**

I: Yeah, like, when I first went into that particular studio, I was like, "This is Rinse FM?" I was expecting it to be in like some council flat, like somewhere in the middle of London, on the 30th floor or something. They've got a nicer studio now, like really well set up and stuff.

**FL: But yeah, it really surprised me. How has the reception been for your music over here?**

I: I'm not too sure, to be honest. I think once the album comes out, and people start listening to it, and me coming over, hopefully in June, we'll see. But there's quite a big buzz about Hyperdub at the moment, which is really exciting. It's also just a really good feeling to finish this album [laughs].

**FL: How long have you been producing?**

I: I guess for about four years. Steve [Goodman, a.k.a. Kode9] put "Please" out in 2008, and we just went from there. I'm still kind of learning and stuff, and it just feels good to have someone like Kode9 trust me so much and take that risk.

**FL: Do you feel a lot of pressure to hold it down for Hyperdub as well as the ladies of the world?**

I: [laughs] Yeah, I guess so. More the Hyperdub thing, though.

**FL: Do you see the whole history-in-the-making happening?**

I: Do I see it? Do you see it? Did you see it with yourself?

**FL: I'm talking to you. Do you see pages of history being written at the moment?**

I: I dunno, maybe. I guess so. It's always been my intention to be different and mess up the dance-music scene. I'm here to destroy things and confuse things—but in a good way, know what I mean? It's just always been my thing; I've always been different.

**FL: You're just a rebel.**

I: Yeah [laughs]. That's where my name comes from as well. Ikonika—destroy things. The UK has this thing about killing

things: When we like a tune, we say “boo” and we put our gun fingers up [*laughs*].

**XLR8R: Ikonika, you used to have a punk past, right?**

I: Yeah, kind of. I used to play the drums in hardcore, metal-core bands. That’s when I really started falling in love with music. Cuz I had been exposed to a lot of R&B, hip-hop, garridge. And then when I found out about bands, I was so intrigued by it. Like, just the whole hardcore culture as well. I was never straight edge, or followed it, but like, just the music and the energy really kinda fascinated me. And just hanging out with loads of different people from school, I guess. Cuz my school was kind of the reject school in the town, so we didn’t have, like, set groups. Everyone would hang out with each other, and everyone would be really friendly. Like, we had the really posh kids hanging out with the poor kids, and the metalheads hanging out with the slick R&B girls.

**FL: I actually went to a high school like that, too. I got kicked out of my regular public school system when I was in 11th grade and I had to do my last year at a “reject school” as well. I was pretty much exposed to punk and stuff around then, too. That’s pretty funny, I didn’t know you had that same kind of upbringing. I lived in this weird suburb of LA, in the Valley. And I guess we’re known for pornography. The world’s largest porn companies are in the valley. So part of this reject school was, like, a lot of girls who were getting involved in that sorta thing. I went to school with a girl who went on to be a very famous porn star. The first gay person I ever met was in that school. You know, just like, alternative cats. Kids with tattoos, just bad-ass, you know, like, 13, 14, or fucking hooked on heroin when they’re, like, 12. It was a bit ghetto. It was all kind of this weird *American Beauty* kinda vibe.**

**XLR8R: When did you start getting into music, FlyLo?**

**FL: I first was introduced to really, I guess, underground electronic music when I was in middle school. I was in band class playing saxophone and there was this kid behind me who was listening to these crazy-ass sounds, like (*makes weird rhythmic clashing noises*), and I was like, “What the fuck is this shit?” that was blasting from his headphones. And I looked back and was like, “Yo, what’s this?” And he gives me this tape of this kid, RAW, from LA. It was this crazy drum & bass and I just got hooked instantly to that sound. And I was already a big fan of like Dr. Dre, all that West Coast hip-hop that was coming out around the ‘90s. I just kinda got into making music that way. Through that and my family having keyboards and toys around to mess with. Our “church” experience was going to my Aunt (Alice Coltrane)’s ashram on Sundays out in Agoura, and she would do a discourse based off the teachings of Sathya Sai Baba, and after that she would play on the organ and all the people in the ashram would play instruments. Really crazy spiritual music happening on Sundays.**

**XLR8R: Is that the obvious cosmic vibe connection with your new record, *Cosmogramma*?**

**FL: Definitely. It’s more so just getting in touch with my roots, if you will. I felt with my last (record) I was**

**kinda holding back a little bit, holding back my personality, my history. I felt like, man, I’ve been hearing so much shit coming out that’s kinda like trying to clone what I was doing, I’m like, “Wow, okay, what are we gonna do about that?” You just kinda have to dive so deep within yourself that it’s a sound that no one else could make but you. And that’s the thing that I’m trying to find; I’m searching for that shit. Ikonika, you know about that, right? Like, you hear all types of shit, and I’m sure you hear people trying to do your thing.**

I: You know, I don’t think anybody’s trying to copy me; I think they’re too scared [*laughs*]. But yeah, I see what you mean about your style. I think you’ve definitely started something where a lot of people wanna kind of imitate or emulate... it just happens when you’re so original like that.

**FL: But you know, I think it’s more so the intent that freaks me out about all that shit. It’s not even the sound so much as, like, just someone doing it to be cool, you know? That’s not why we do it. I can’t speak for you, but... (*laughs*).**

I: I try and put as much of my personality in my music as possible, and that would be quite hard to copy. If producers in general just strive to do that, then they’ll be okay.

**FL: Absolutely. It is a process, you know, and you’ll say, “Oh, I did it this time around,” and then next time you’ll say, “Oh, I got even further.” This is your first album, right? The next one, who knows what is gonna be inspiring to you at that point. So, I guess I wanna know, where’s it going next? What’s happening in the UK with the whole dubstep thing? Because, I feel like people are getting kinda antsy and anxious.**

I: Yeah, it’s just we’ve been going on with the whole hardcore continuum thing—whether it’s gonna continue or not—and just trying to put a label on stuff and call it... you know, we’re in that stage where it’s like, “What do you call it,” know what I mean? Cuz it’s mutating again, and this time it’s mutated even more quickly than grime or bassline. It’s now the next level of dubstep—what is it, funky? Is it post-dubstep? Is it wonky? Like, all these names that are just circulating.

**FL: Why are people trying to, like... *aarrggghhh*... it just ruins the whole thing, I think, when people start trying to do this (categorizing) shit, you know?**

I: Yeah, it’s really frustrating. So, I come from the dubstep scene, and when I started listening to dubstep and making dubstep, all the producers that were in dubstep—all the pioneers—were all doing something different, and they didn’t sound the same. Like, dubstep didn’t have one particular sound—the bpm was there, and sub-bass was there, but everyone was putting whatever they wanted on top of it.

**FL: Yeah, exactly! Cuz, like, I was doing that “womp womp womp” shit like way before (*laughs*), know what I mean? They made a whole genre off that shit.**

I: That’s the thing: People think dubstep is wobble, and people always ask me, “Do you think you’re dubstep? You sound like funky now,” or, “You’re doing this,” or, “You’re 8-bit.” And it’s like, if I was doing this in 2005, you would call it dubstep. But if you wanna talk about it, then I guess it’s like people like me who now see dubstep—or the genre formerly known as dubstep—as an influence, and I’m taking bits from funky, from all my childhood things... all that kind of stuff. That’s what I mean about mashing things up, and destroying things [*laughs*]. Rebuilding, rebooting, trying again... I dunno, whatever. ■



[Listen to this interview in its entirety at XLR8R.com/133extras.](https://xlr8r.com/133extras)

Ikonika's *Contact, Love, Want, Have* is out now on Hyperdub; *Flying Lotus' Cosmogramma* is out May 4 on Warp. [myspace.com/ikonika](https://myspace.com/ikonika), [flying-lotus.com](https://flying-lotus.com)



THE JUAN MACLEAN QUIZZES **VIRGO'S** MERWYN SANDERS  
ABOUT CHICAGO'S GLORY DAYS.

# NOVEMBER

MODERATOR WALTER WASACZ PHOTOS JAMES P. MORSE

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Twenty-plus years after the original release of their seminal self-titled album, Chicago house pioneers Virgo are seeing their masterwork reissued and receiving a whole new round of praise in the process. The Juan MacLean (a.k.a. New Yorker John MacLean) got on the phone with Virgo's Merwyn Sanders to discuss the group's history and learn a little more about the golden era of Chicago house music.

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**Jaun MacLean: Are you surprised at how often you are referenced as a touchstone, a pioneering group for people making house music today?**

Merwyn Sanders: We're really surprised. I mean, it's been 20 years and we really haven't heard anything. The only thing is once in a while I call Gramophone Records in Chicago to ask if they have *Virgo Four* in the racks, and they say, "yeah." But that's about it. Otherwise, we had no clue.

**It's funny because in my world, you guys, and a lot of your contemporaries, are held in incredibly high regard. Are you aware of how much respect or acknowledgment you get in Europe compared to the United States?**

What I can say is whatever awareness there seems to be is all from Europe. We're not aware of any here. Especially in our hometown, Chicago. And the only way we found that out is through our publishing, you know, where it's being played. I've run into some DJs from over there during the last 20 years who told me they have our records. But it's only been like two or three people.

**How active have you been over the last 20 years?**

Oh, Eric [Lewis] and I actually never stopped making music. We made a lot of music back then [for the Trax label], but we didn't venture out to another label. I wanted to get something out on Strictly Rhythm. I was a big fan of that label. But it was the same thing we heard everywhere: "Not our cup of tea." Larry [Sherman, co-founder of Trax] was our only avenue to go, and we were kinda cool with him personally, but even he didn't put out everything we gave him. Our catalog is around 24 tracks. And that's not including the stuff we didn't give him.

**What about now? Are you still working on tracks?**

Oh, yeah. We've done so much alone and every now and then we get together. We've been doing the music ever since. Actually, I did one release four years ago, something called "Elevator House Music," that they put on a compilation called *Twilight Trax*.

**I don't know if you're familiar with the label I'm on, DFA, which sort of bridges the gap between indie rock and dance music...**

I only heard of it recently, yeah...

**The old-school Chicago sound gets referenced a lot, and just as an aside, I bet if you send stuff to DFA they might be interested in doing something with you. But I also wanted to ask you how much your production technique has changed from 20 years ago, how much you've gotten into computers. Your really early stuff doesn't sound like it was made with a sequencer. Parts of it had a much looser feel, like it was actually played by hand. I was wondering if that was true.**

Yeah, that's totally true. We didn't even have a sequencer! The parts that seemed sequenced were just triggered by a drum machine. Everything else was just played. We were just talking about that, which is funny, because everything now is digital and done on your laptop or desktop or whatever. It's been kind of a transition for us because we're used to getting a piece of gear, you know, turning it on, getting a pad, tweaking it a bit, and playing it. Back in the day, we would play the whole length it needed to be. So if it was like five, six minutes, we'd play the whole thing. Now, of course, you can play it for a quick two seconds and just loop it a bunch of times. But it takes something away from the track.

**Dance music got away from what you're talking about, everything just got really synthetic and locked down. What people are responding to with you guys is that looser feel, even if they don't know why they are responding to it.**

We still do it the same way, but we also do it the other way now. It depends on the track and how it starts and develops. The other day we were messing around, just me playing something on the guitar, Eric playing something on the keyboard, whatever is happening in the moment. We started out as musicians in a band, not as DJs, who also did house music.

**I always wondered if artists like you guys were trying to have mainstream success, to get your songs played on the radio.**

Oh, yeah! It was always one of my biggest goals. Eric and me always talked about wanting it. That's where technology has hurt it in a way, because almost anybody with a laptop can do it now by clicking and dragging, and you can come up with a pretty good track. It sounds like everyone else's, but it doesn't have that feel you were talking about...

**Millions of people are doing that now. But there's also this whole other movement of people making house music, like the Toronto-based group Azari & III, which sounds a lot like you guys, making stuff like it could have been produced in Chicago 20 years ago.**

Eric and I were just talking about that. We're kinda shocked when we hear stuff like that. We knew each other and played together for 10 years before we started putting anything out. It was just what we were doing. We were unaware of any influence we might have had. It was just normal to us. But I think it's cool



that people are getting something out of it now. The way we're working now is to develop more of the vocals, with live bass, like we did on the *Virgo Four* album. That's what we did before and we want to go back to doing that.

**I bet if you went to a place like London, there'd be a massive turnout for your show.**

Really? I was totally unaware.

**I was always curious about your name. There was also another Virgo from that time period.**

That was Larry Sherman's idea. Eric and I didn't know anybody else on Trax. Never ran into anyone, except eventually Ron Hardy. The first Virgo records [that featured Marshall Jefferson, Adonis Smith, and Vince Lawrence] had a certain vibe, and Larry thought we had that same vibe. He figured nobody had ever

heard of us so he was going to put "Virgo" on it but add "Four" because it was the fourth album of that type of music. So that's how we ended up being called Virgo Four. You know, we both were against it. I threw more of a fit than Eric, who was more laid back about it. I was the one always arguing with Larry. But that's how he split it up as, you know, an unspoken deal to put some name recognition on the tracks. So we were both recording as Virgo at the same time. That's the story behind that.

**Was there a cohesive scene back then, and were you guys into it or outside of it? People now can imagine you guys hanging out at the Warehouse on a Friday night.**

Oh, yeah, we were doing that. Eric and me and our other friends would be at the Warehouse, the Playground, the Music Box, the Power Plant with Frankie Knuckles... I remember the first

time we went to the Power Plant we weren't old enough. The guy at the door asked us how old we were and I tell him my real age and he says, "Sorry, you guys can't get in." I don't know why I didn't lie to get in for the first time. I'll never forget that. But, yeah, we were part of the club scene and we also went to the dance parties at Mendel Catholic Prep, where Eric went to high school. That was another big hotspot for house parties.

**What was the vibe like at the parties in Chicago back then?**

Oh, wow. It's hard to put into words because no club now is like Chicago was back then. Imagine everybody going to the club for the music, and just for each other. They wanted to hear what Ron Hardy or Frankie were going to be playing that night. Even if you didn't dance you just wanted to hear what was going to be played. I mean, this was at a time when you had



"WE DIDN'T EVEN HAVE A SEQUENCER! SO IF IT WAS LIKE FIVE, SIX MINUTES, WE'D PLAY THE WHOLE THING."



FROM LEFT: ERIC LEWIS, MERWYN SANDERS

people bringing tape recorders to the parties, because they wanted to get one of their mixes. There's no vibe going on like that right now, as far as I know.

#### No...

It was a whole different culture that we were a part of. I'll give you a quick example: The Music Box was literally a box. It had these enormous speakers in it, so the music was so loud you couldn't talk, there were no fancy lights except for maybe a strobe light they turned on every now and then. And they might have served only Kool-Aid, I can't remember. But you didn't even want to drink, you just wanted to hear the next track Hardy was gonna play. It was only about the music going on and about hanging out—that was the vibe. I remember a few people having sex on the floor or something, but it was so dark and loud that nobody would be paying any attention and they wouldn't care.

**I DJ a lot all over the world and it seems like what it's turned into now is the night starts out really slow and the people basically have to get wasted on alcohol, coke, or ecstasy to start having a good time. Then it doesn't really matter what music is playing. I always wondered how much drugs played a part back then in dance-music culture, because now the two are synonymous.**

I had friends who did this or did that, but that wasn't something Eric and I were into at all. Neither one of us drank, neither one of us smoked or did anything else. But it didn't seem to be really a part of the scene, in general, just something a few people did. Not so much related to the club or the music, I mean, just what some people would do wherever. That's how we looked at it. I think it was different in those days even in that sense.

**I think that speaks a lot about how it was back then. I don't drink or do any**

**drugs at all, and when other DJs or promoters find this out there is almost this element of distrust. People can't believe that you can be out DJing or out dancing and enjoying that atmosphere without being totally wrecked.**

Exactly, I know what you mean, I get that all the time... I tell people I never smoked pot and they say, "Sure, *right*." They don't believe me! I'm a church boy. I grew up in the church and that's always stayed with me.

**It seems to come through in your music.**

Definitely, you can hear some of the same chords, and a lot of the song titles come from that side of us, like "Do You Know Who You Are?" I mean, Eric and I both come from that tradition.

**How much attention were you paying to some of your contemporaries, like Kraftwerk, for instance?**

Kraftwerk was huge with us, probably number

one on the list. We also were listening to, like, Yellow Magic Orchestra...

**It's really interesting that long before the internet you would be so influenced by these guys on the other side of the world from Chicago.**

I used to DJ and I was buying everything. With Kraftwerk, you had to get two of everything. They were electronic, but they were funky. How could you not be into it if you were into that kind of music?

**They also had a huge influence on what was going on in Detroit. How much were you aware of the Detroit techno scene?**

Not much at all, really. Eric and I weren't really tapped into what was going on in Detroit or New York. We were kind of in our own world a little too much...

**I actually think that helps to make something a little more original as well, because you're not being so influenced by things going on around**

**you. Have you guys ever played live before?**  
No, never. Not as Virgo Four...

**Is it possible to do it now? What are your plans for the future?**

Oh, yeah. We've been talking to Rush Hour about that, trying to get some tour dates together, figuring out different ways how a two-man group can put on a great show. It's just a good feeling to get some appreciation for something you've done over 20 years later. I'm excited about it. We plan on getting the older tracks together, making some new material and releasing a bunch of stuff.

**You've touched so many people's lives with your music and now it's coming back around.**

Wow, it's really nice of you to say. We're just looking forward to keeping it going. Thanks, Juan. ■

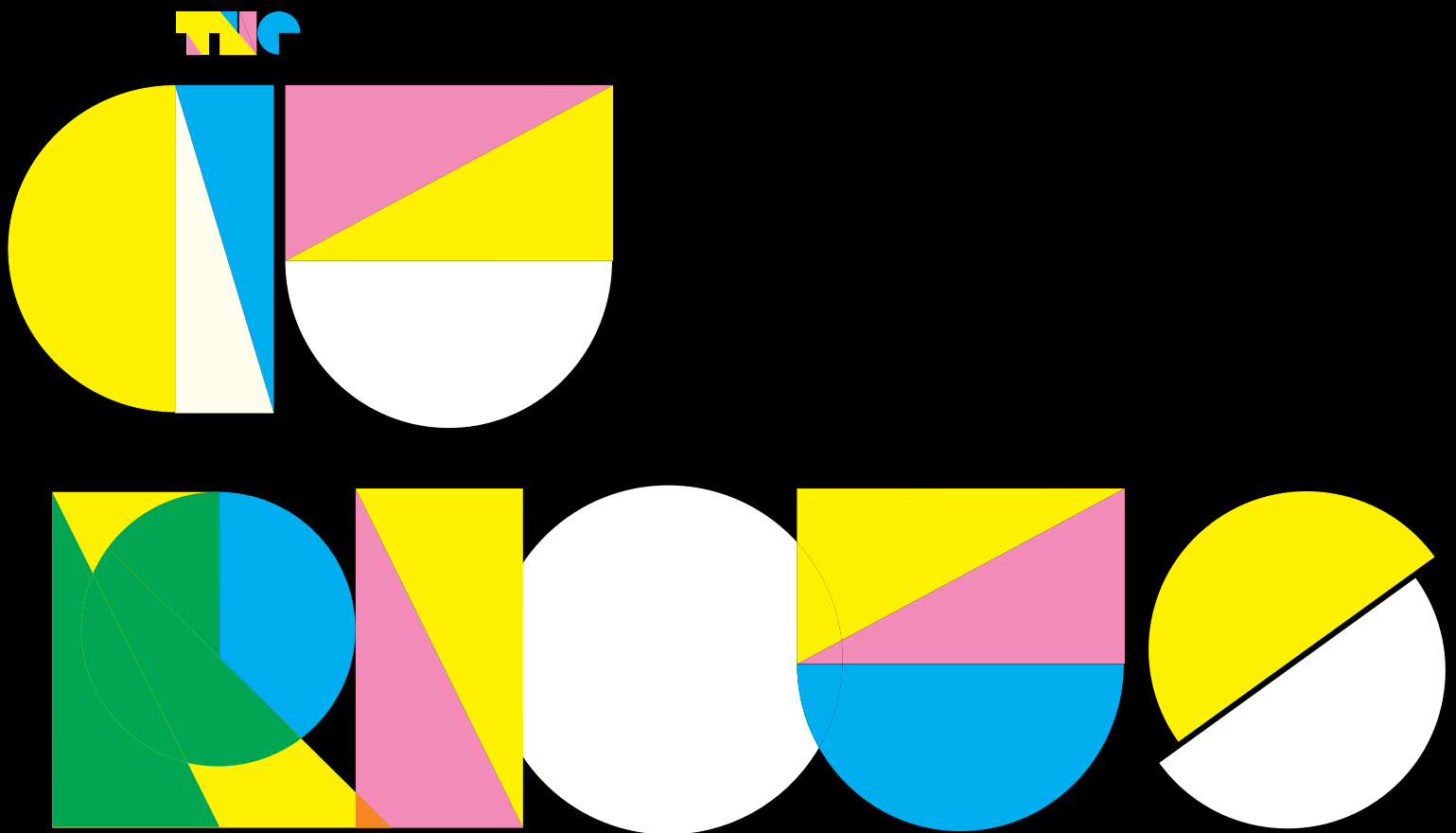
*Virgo's Virgo* is out now on Rush Hour. The Juan MacLean's *DJ-KICKS* is out now on !K7. [thejuanmaclean.com](http://thejuanmaclean.com), [rushhour.nl](http://rushhour.nl)



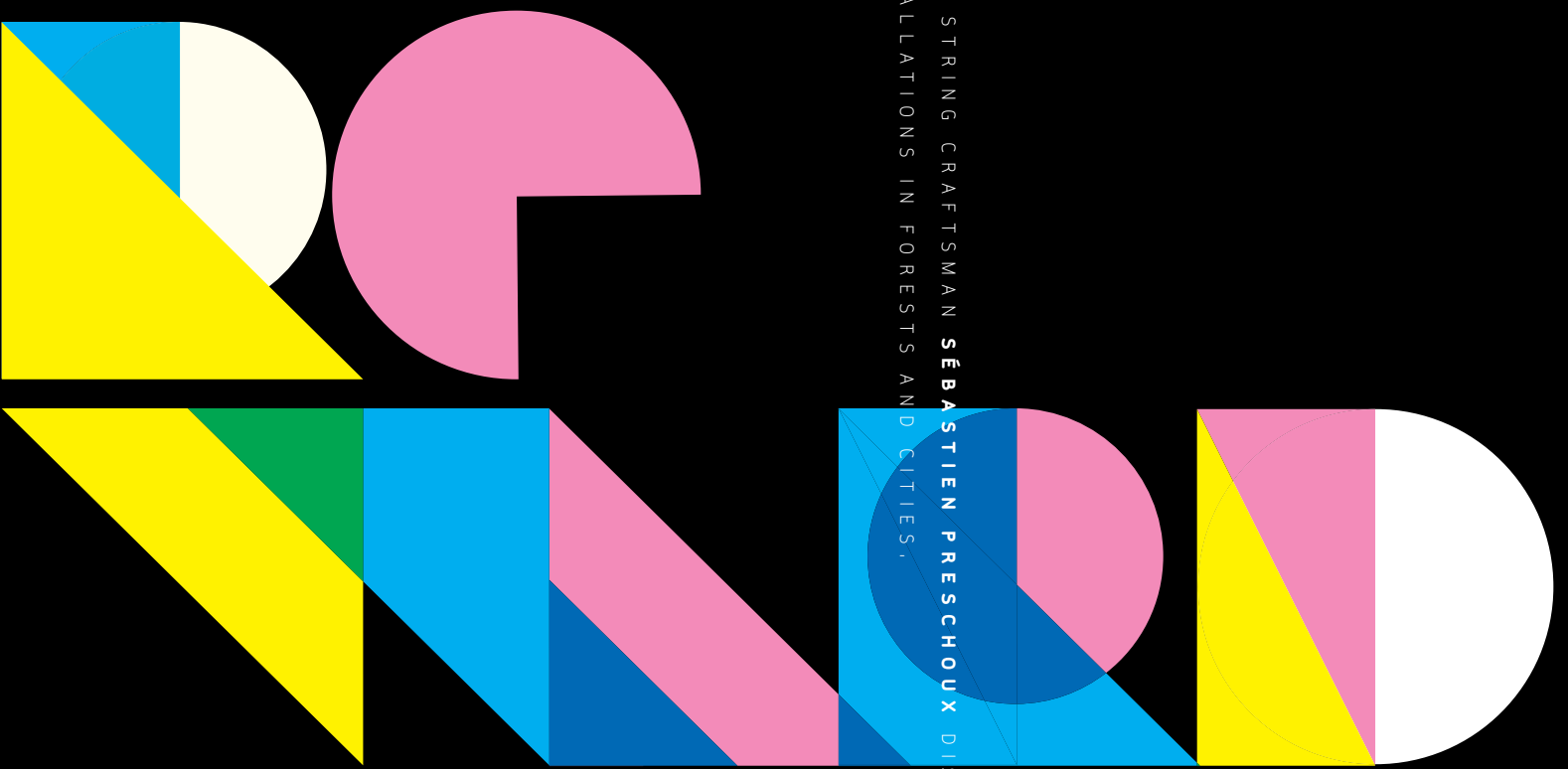
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MODERATOR ALL GILOW



LEGO MASTER **JAN VORMANN** AND STRING CRAFTSMAN **SEBASTIEN PRESCHOUX** DISCUSS THEIR INTRICATE, VIBRANT INSTALLATIONS IN FORESTS AND CITIES.





Berliner Jan Vormann and Parisian Sébastien Preschoux create clever, site-specific art installations that interact with their immediate environments. For Vormann, a 25-year-old fine-art student at the Kunsthochschule Berlin Weißensee, it means adding LEGO blocks to missing bits of walls on municipal structures' façades. The 35-year-old, self-taught Preschoux makes meticulous webs out of colored string in forests.

Though they're in different countries and use wildly different materials, we recently hooked the guys up to chat about what they've got in common—working in public space, the debate of man versus machine, and the importance of photo documentation.

**XLR8R: How long have you guys been working on these projects?**

Jan Vormann: The Dispatchwork project started in 2007. Working in public spaces in general started way earlier. Going out, wanting to change something noticeable to others is a longtime hobby, because it is fun. Sébastien Preschoux: Since the beginning, my work concerns the line and the point. In my 2D productions, I try to produce effects of depth or relief. One day, I wished to look at the volume of these productions, and the only means for me was to take out the lines of the plan. I weaved threads to create optical effects, but very quickly I wanted these volumes to be bigger and bigger, [so I began] to produce them in the nature, almost three years ago.

**XLR8R: What are your working processes like?**

JV: We go out and do it... There really isn't much more planning going on. It happens that I am somewhere in the world for some reason, and then I take my project as a hobby. SP: Depending on the weather, I call my friend, photographer Ludovic Le Couster, and I suggest leaving for a forest to find the place for the next installation. We walk, and when we find a sufficiently big place, with beautiful tree trunks that represent beautiful lines or curves, we stop. I observe colors, complexity of the ground, light, and I estimate the time for the preparation and realization of the installation. Then, I discuss with Ludovic the centering of the photo. We return the next day and I begin to make the installation with the cotton threads. Once I've finished, Ludovic takes the photo. We are going to begin installations in urban zones this year.

**JV: Looking at your webpage, Sébastien, I realize that you have the human-vs.-machine approach. I am really into machines, too—well, you probably aren't, because you are in a sort of concurrency with them, right? But machines are always precise and clean. It's my pleasure to see straight lines, circles, laser-cut plastic, and such—which doesn't necessarily mean I don't like wild paintings and/or "trashy" art. You probably don't use machines for drawing at all, right? Would you consider yourself fit to step up to a machine, in terms of precision?**

SP: I have nothing against machines; it's what we make now which disturbs me. We are in a period when everything has to go very fast, we are invaded by images that we consume with surprising speed, and we eventually pay more attention to [whether or not] it's a human production or a production realized in the computer. The computer is a formidable tool, but it does not leave a place for randomness or error. In your activity, as in mine, Ctrl+Z doesn't exist, and this is what makes things much more interesting. During my last exhibition, I was fascinated by the number of people taking time to observe my drawings because they are handmade. Twenty or 30 years ago, everything was handmade, and it seemed normal for everybody. I do not want my fingers to only click a mouse—that's why I produce manually. It is as when we were children, when we drew for hours without asking questions. This is also what seduced me in your work—an intelligent return to childhood.

**XLR8R: What characteristics does an ideal installation space need to have?**

JV: A good spot for me is a wall that is seriously damaged. A little scratch often won't do if it isn't deep enough into the façade. I go see things I want to see—sights, museums, neighborhoods where people that I know live—and if there are spots that suit

me, I fix them up. I try to combine these two aspects of my life. It is good if many people pass by it so it is seen, but then again, if it is a hidden spot, it will last longer. SP: A good place for the installation is a place with space all around, well-spaced-out trees, and beautiful background. But by definition nature is an ideal place, because it is always different. The only constraint that I give myself is that the installation must be more complex than the previous one. I have to experiment every time.

**XLR8R: How long does it take to install one of each of your pieces?**

JV: Depends if the sun is shining or not. I mostly go out only if the weather is good. So I would say around 30 minutes, depending on the size of the patch. After all, I have developed a technique, so I can do it quite quickly and if I need unnoticed. SP: It is necessary to have eight to 10 hours for a small monochromatic installation, and several days for the big polychromatic installations.

**JV: What do you do in winter times? For example, I tried this winter to continue my Dispatchwork project in Moscow, and I figured it would be nice to have the snow contrast for once. But -30° is way too cold to handle little plastic pieces. Your work is quite delicate, so I figure you wouldn't go out and do it then.**

SP: I take advantage of the winter to work on my exhibitions, develop my drawings and paintings, and prepare the installations for warmer days. But this year things are going to change. I am realizing some installations in the mountains with the first snows, and I shall return to them several times in the year. Do you leave your installations?

**JV: I leave my installations alone after I have done them, yes. I rarely glue them down. Also, it is impossible to connect flat plastic with dusty stones. There**



**are some places where people take care of the installations, and they stay longer there. But otherwise, I like the ephemeral aspect, too. I wondered, can I come upon your installations while going through the forests? You also leave them, right?**

SP: Of course, you can find [them]. Like you, I leave my installations. It is a kind of present, what I call the reward of the curious. The installations in the forest stay several weeks, then I return on the scene and take back the threads to leave the forest clean. I do not know if some of my installations are destroyed by people or nature, but I think that it is nature which takes back its rights. Do you choose to work in the street to offer what you make to everybody?

JV: Sometimes, if there are too many people, like in very touristic hot-spots, I visit during my own tourism and do the installation quickly and hidden. Then I leave, turn the

corner, and come back a while later to see reactions. I am not a street performer—if it happens, and nice people join in, this is perfect. Nonetheless, I don't expect people to stop and stand and drop coins in a hat or something. If many people interact, then it gets quite diffuse, and nobody knows who initiated the action anymore—so this is the best. Recently in New York, I was on a wall with many people who left one after the other, and at the end I was standing there alone, doing one last piece, and people who came by saw the whole colored wall and wondered if I had stood there the whole afternoon alone putting up the pieces like a madman. All in all, I like to inspire people with the action, but I don't want to expect anything from them. Unexpectedly, a lot of elderly people like to join. It seems like they have time to pause and play. Kids always want to stay, but the parents drag them behind them if they have no time.

**SP: Do you ever secretly observe peoples' reactions?**

JV: In the near future, I want to make a piece and set up a camera, because I really never have seen anyone taking the installation down. I don't want to publish it or expose anyone as a thief; I am just curious what kind of people take them away. I think of it this way: Who will take the pieces, and what will he or she do with it? Answer: Somebody who wants to play with the pieces, so how can I be mad? If it sparks creativity and gets recycled, great. And I am sure there are people who just like to collect things, but then again, site-specific elements work on the site only. So people who like it should leave it there, to see it there. But it only needs one person to take it out. It depends on the neighborhood, too.

**XLR8R: Have either of you run into any trouble with the law?**

JV: Not really, and especially not connected to the *Dispatchwork* project. In general, there is no need to get in contact with the executioners of law. There are many ways to get past them. I was once told to remove my installations outside a museum of contemporary art in Berlin, the Hamburger Bahnhof. I figure the security personnel have their orders to make sure nothing changes without permission, but this wall was really perfect for it.

SP: No problem with the law at the moment... I think the upcoming installations in the city risk some problems but we shall see!

**JV: For our kind of public installations, as for all graffiti and street art, photo documentation is a big deal. How important to you is the difference between coming upon the piece in reality or seeing it in a picture?**

SP: It is important for me to work with

Ludovic, because he works in the same state of mind—no digital technology. Without him, the installation doesn't exist, and without me, the photo doesn't exist. Often the installations are hidden in the forest, thus few people can see them.

**JV: You take pictures from many angles, although there is often one picture where the chosen perspective makes it look very graphic, like two-dimensional lines were inserted onto the photo itself, instead of real physical 3D installations. You are also searching for this, right?**

SP: We give the illusion of the digital technology with the reality, but if we had made it 30 years ago, nobody would have asked the question if it was real or made on a computer. I find this to be an interesting approach. I choose to take photos from several angles to allow people to see the various aspects of installations, to allow

them to turn all around virtually, but also to prove the real aspect of the installation. But for me, nothing is better than the reality, an installation several meters high and long with several kilometers of threads does not register on a computer screen. This question made me think for a long time because I'd never asked myself this, but I believe that you are right. I think that I unconsciously want to prove to myself that humans can make [things] as well as the machine, but sensitively. ■

Jan Vormann's *Dispatchwork* project can be viewed at [dispatchwork.info](http://dispatchwork.info), and his sculptures, drawings and installations are up on [janvormann.com](http://janvormann.com). Check out more of Sébastien Preschoux's installations, as well as his drawings and paintings at [m-vs-m.com](http://m-vs-m.com).

# OPEN

HOLDING DOWN THE BERLIN DUBSTEP SCENE, SCUBA  
FINALLY COMES UP FOR AIR.



# CLOSE

TRANSCRIPTION PATRICK FALLON  
PHOTOS MEGAN CULLEN

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Londoner Paul Rose (a.k.a. Hotflush label boss Scuba) moved to Berlin a mere two years ago, but in that short time, he's made the killer full-length, *Triangulation*, and kick-started the city's best dubstep night, Sub:stance, at the venerated Berghain club. Fellow ex-pat Scott Monteith (a.k.a. the dubwise Deadbeat) sat down with him for a pint and got the lowdown.

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**Deadbeat: So how long have you lived here in Berlin?**

Scuba: I moved over in September 2007, it was. So, yeah, two and a half years now. It's actually really flown by, as well. Haven't really done much apart from sit in my room and write tunes.

**Totally. You've been hyper-productive.**

Yeah, well, reasonably. I think hyper-productive is going a bit far. I mean, studio-wise, it's been going pretty well. It's all at the expense of everything else. I've totally failed to learn German, and all that kinda stuff. I don't know the city at all, apart from a few clubs. I know the way from my flat to Berghain and back.

**I think it was February of 2007 that I came.**

So were you in Canada before?

**I was in Montreal for 12 years. I was born just outside of Toronto, but yeah, I lived there for most of my life.**

I've got family just outside of Toronto, actually. In Barrie. You might have heard of it?

**There's like a huge park for concerts there. I remember going to Lollapalooza and seeing Ministry and Trent Reznor and those guys back in the day.**

So how come you moved in the first place?

**Well, I was working with -scape before. I did four albums with them.**

Oh, did you? I didn't know that. Yeah, I know Stefan [Betke, a.k.a. Pole, -scape's label head] reasonably well.

**I came over in February of 2007 under the auspices of coming to tour for like a month. But I just split up with my wife, and I came over here, and after being here for a month I was like, "Okay, forget it." And I went home for Mutek, packed everything, and moved.**

Yeah, it's one of those places. It's kind of just a bit easy to be here. I haven't even thought about moving back. I mean, I grew up in London, which is a completely different world to here.

**In what way?**

Well, they're both big cities obviously, but Berlin doesn't feel like a big city at all.

**No, not at all. It's such an easy place to be totally involved and party your head off and go nuts every night of the week if you want to, but I find it a really easy city, as well, to just go completely dark and not see anyone for days on end and just work. Actually, and I've talked to other friends (about this), there seems to be this window around three or four months where a massive depression sets in. It's really like, "Holy shit, I'm totally alone. It's dark all the time..."**

[Laughs] I think the first winter people tend to find pretty painful.

**Exactly. I think the winters here are much more difficult. I mean, in Montreal it goes down to minus-40, way colder than here, but I find the winters here much worse. There's no fucking sun, it's just dark all the time.** It's true, and this last one was really bad. I thought it was over, but today it's fucking shit again.

**It's cold again! Thursday everyone was out and about, the patios were all full...**

That's the thing! It's like the first excuse to get out there. Everyone was like, "Let's eat outside! Let's go out in a t-shirt!" But it's only 15 degrees, guys.

**So you been doing Sub:Stance for a year now?**

It's going to be two years in July. Second birthday is July.

**Nice. How did that come about? Did you just kinda cold-call those guys and be like, "Hey, we wanna do a night"?**

It was me and the guy who runs Surefire Agency [Paul "Spymania" Fowler], who's my agent, and we'd been knocking around the idea of doing a night. He lives over here as well. He moved around the same time. In fact, he moved cuz he got a job starting up what was going to be the !K7 booking



agency, and that didn't go too well. To the extent that I went to go play some gigs in Australia, and I got to my stopover in LA or something like that and had an e-mail that said, "Paul doesn't work here anymore. I'll be taking your thing." But we were mates anyways, and he started up his own thing, which is Surefire. Anyway, we were knocking around the idea of doing a sort of dubstep type of thing. Obviously, if you want to do a night in the city, the number one choice is Berghain.

#### **Absolutely.**

But, equally, how do you get in there? Especially then. I think we were the first outside promoters to do anything there. Basically what happened was, Paul, completely by chance, met Andre, do you know him? He randomly was introduced to him, and said, "I'm thinking of doing a night. Can we set up a meeting?" We went in for this meeting, and the first thing they said to us was, "Well, do you want to do a Friday night?" So obviously conversations had been had. I knew Torsten [Pröfrock] and Pete [Kuschnerreit] and all these people at Hard Wax. So I guess there must've been some kind of thing going on.

#### **The seeds were planted elsewhere.**

Yeah, cuz we couldn't believe it. We thought maybe [we'd get] a Thursday or a Sunday or something. Yeah, cuz the first night we did was the first time the big room has ever been opened on a Friday. So it was all a bit of a stab in the dark for us, and also for them, I think. Cuz obviously it's a bit of a curve ball putting on dubstep...

#### **But they're great parties.**

It's amazing, really, how well they've gone.

#### **I'll never forget dancing with Sam Shackleton to Loefah playing like Congo Natty at fucking nine o'clock in the morning at Berghain. Like, "Holy shit, this is totally insane!"**

That must've been the last...

#### **The one-year anniversary. That was a good time.**

It's weird, cuz you know, like I said, it was a risk. But also like, after the first one... The first one was great, like massive queues and stuff. It was just the case of like, can this be a regular thing now? Or is it just gonna be a one-off? And the fact that it's continued to be so good, it's like, yeah—it's mad, really.

#### **I think the cool thing, too, is, with that night and with the Wax Treatment night that we were at yesterday, there's been over the last year or two, there's been so much ink wasted with people trying to map some sort of dubstep/techno crossover blah blah blah... It's just bullshit. At some point it becomes such a frustrating thing.**

It's such a cliché now.

#### **Yeah like whatever "flavor of the month" sub-sub-sub-genre-meme whatever...**

Totally, yeah. Well, what about you, though? What have you done primarily since you've been here?

#### **Well, there was the *Roots and Wire* album on Wagon Repair a year and a half ago. Almost two years ago now. It's great working with the Wagon Repair guys, they're like good buddies of mine, but it also opened up this whole other world of going and playing techno clubs. Which really sorta changes your sound when you're up there. You gotta keep people dancing for an hour. You can't crawl too far into your own navel.**

Have you gotten more into techno things since you've been here?

#### **I would say so.**

And do you think it's partly because you've been here?

#### **Absolutely. For sure. I mean, Montreal is a wonderful city. It's nice. There's the Mutek festival every year, but at the end of the day there's no club scene. There's no strong, established club scene. You know? The beat clubs are the same 10 after-hours DJs that have been playing at the same after-hours clubs forever.**

I've never been to Montreal, but I have heard good things.

#### **As I say, it's a great city, but it's not like you can be working on a track and take it down to somebody to play that night. Club owners don't give a shit about soundsystems, generally. They're money pits for people that go there and drink and do blow. So obviously, with the opportunity of so many more places to go out here, being out more and being more engaged kind of re-awakened my interest in techno.**

It's quite hard to avoid it. I totally lost touch with techno completely, cuz I was into it when I was young. When I was like 15 or 16 and first started going out to clubs, I was really into like mid-'90s UK stuff. Then I got into jungle and completely forgot about techno until like maybe three years ago—I suddenly got into it again. It was really moving here that put it back into context. In London there's clubs that play it, but, like you said, there's no scene, no bunch of guys who are making it and playing out all time. No one I could talk to, and kind of like...

#### **Engage with. There's not a community to engage with.**

Exactly. That was the good thing about dubstep in the early days in London. There was maybe like 20 or 30 people who all did it. But it got to the stage where, like, I've had enough of this now. I need to leave.

#### **It's the same thing with like all of us Canadian techno guys, like Mat Jonson and Mike Shannon and everybody. It's cool that everybody's sort of gone on, and we're able to live from this now, and "Isn't that exciting?" but at the end of the day, it's still just a bunch of, like, beer-drinking Canadian hosers enjoying a laugh.**

It actually reinforces it, because when you see these people you haven't seen for ages, it's like, "Oh, yeah, remember when we were all nothings?"

#### **Totally. Yeah. I mean, generally speaking—obviously there are exceptions to the rule—I find that one of the things with this city, it tends to be a pretty ego-less environment. You don't get the like super-club,**



**superstar DJ, champagne-swilling bullshit so much.**

Yeah, I think that's right. And I think actually Berghain has probably got quite a lot to do with that. That's kind of their whole thing.

**For sure. It's fully their M.O.**

And I think all the other clubs take their lead from that. With the soundsystems as well, it's definitely got better since I've been here. Again, it's clubs taking the lead from Berghain, cuz they obviously pay a lot of attention to that side of it. It's really important, obviously.

**There's nothing more frustrating to me, and nothing more mind-blowing to me, than going and playing in so many places, anywhere in the world...**

Especially the kind of music we do. It's like a lot of it is all about having that clarity...

**Yeah, clarity and low-end pressure and all of that stuff. It's astounding to me to arrive to play in places that have, like, public address, two little speakers and a guitar amp for the bass. It's like, what do you expect here? Of course it sounds like shit.**

So is it mainly in Europe you're playing out at the moment?

**Yeah, for the most part.**

I think you played out in the States with 2562 though, I think?

**In Canada, recently we played for the Olympics, actually (laughs).**

Oh, is that what it was?

**It was me, Martyn, and Dave (Huismans, a.k.a. 2562), and it was really quite funny.**

Yeah, that must've been. Was it some kind of like...

**They had that Cultural Olympiad connected to the Olympics. There's this space, I can't remember which of the universities, but they got this space called Code Live that's this sort of big black-box room with good sound and lights and whatever. Kind of a wack party. I mean, whatever, we had a good time, but it was playing for like 45 minutes.**

So was it just you three?

**I can't remember who else was playing that night. There were a couple other people as well.**

Did it shut down at like, two, or something?

**Yeah, exactly. It was really quite ridiculous.**

That's the other thing about Berlin. Your sense of time, in terms of clubs, is totally warped. You don't assume everything is gonna go 'til, like, nine in the morning.

**Yeah, completely. The whole thing is just shifted, where prime time is like when you're playing at six in the morning.**

Yeah, and you play anywhere else when you're on at six and there's no one there.

**Completely. So you just did a DJ mix and an album?**

Basically, I've been really, really far too busy pretty much the last six months. I did the mix in September. As soon as I finished the mix, we decided that the album was going to come out in March. I'd done about like 30 percent of it, so I had to finish all of that before Christmas. It was sorta ridiculous. Between the middle of September and

like the 20th of December I had, like, one day off, worked solidly for pretty much three months. Since then it's just been interviews, and, "Why did you move to Berlin?" like 50 times [laughs]. It's been good, the way people have reacted to the stuff that's come out. You can't really ask for much more, can you, when you work your ass off and people like it? ■

"YOU CAN'T REALLY ASK FOR MUCH MORE, CAN YOU, WHEN YOU WORK YOUR ASS OFF AND PEOPLE LIKE IT?"



Listen to this interview in its entirety at [XLR8R.com/133extras](https://xlr8r.com/133extras).

Scuba's *Triangulation* is out now on Hotflush. Deadbeat's *Radio Rothko* is out now on The Agriculture. [myspace.com/paulhotflush](https://myspace.com/paulhotflush), [myspace.com/deadbeatcomputermusic](https://myspace.com/deadbeatcomputermusic)



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## ALBUM REVIEWS

### ELLEN ALLIEN

*Dust*

BPitch Control

### MARCEL DETTMANN

*Dettmann*

Ostgut Ton

### MARTIN BUTTRICH

*Crash Test*

Desolat



A TRIO OF GERMAN VETS OFFERS NEW LONG-PLAYERS TO THE DECIDEDLY SINGLES-ORIENTED TECHNO WORLD.

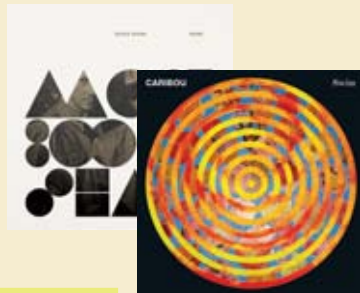
Let's be honest: The album format has not been overly kind to techno. Tracks experienced in the happy haze of club life aren't usually listened to in a pre-set chronological order in the comforts of home. The closest you come to recapturing the good times of the night before is to pop in a mix CD by one of your favorite DJs. Even then, it doesn't come close to matching the extra-sensory "wow!" factor of dancing in a room full of people, immersed in pulsating rhythm and sound. There are exceptions to the rule, but more artists need to figure out how to have it both ways, sustaining the same 4/4 thrill on full-length recordings as they cultivate in a club setting. Three veteran German producer/DJs—Ellen Allien, Marcel Dettmann, and Martin Buttrich—attempt to bridge this nagging live sound vs. studio sound gap on their new releases.

Of the three, Allien got started first on this quest, with *Statkind* (2001) and *Berlinette* (2003), two long-players that began to showcase her multiple approaches to song-based techno, followed later by *Thrills* (2005) and *Sool* (2008). *Dust*, Allien's fifth LP of her own productions, contains less of the industrial and glitchy underpinnings of her earlier work, instead crafting a cycle of tracks that features more of her love of indie rock and quirky electro-disco styles. "Flashy Flashy" uses heavily processed voices, acid synth lines, and a catchy, childlike melody ("rolling between bodies and sounds") that comments on the club experience she knows so well; "Sun the Rain" is straight-up jangly guitar pop with Allien's breathy vocals riding shotgun; "Ever" is an infectiously bouncy romp that few, even hardened cynics, will resist; and "Schlumi" finds a funky, psychedelic groove and stays there, thanks to a ripping bassline and

hard-charging drum patterns.

If hard-charging is your cup of tea, you'll find it on Marcel Dettmann's debut LP. Sort of. Best known as a resident at Berlin's Berghain club, Dettmann is strongest when he strips his tracks down to pure texture in motion, like on the skeletal "Argon" and the crackly "Reticle." He turns it up a notch or two on "Motive," "Irritant," and "Screen," all of which recall the feral minimal beauty of Basic Channel/Chain Reaction artists like Scion and T+++. But for all its virtues, Dettmann's talent appears constrained by the limitations of originality itself, as if it's begging to be set free to endlessly toy with tracks made by other producers.

Surprisingly, the best of the bunch might be the first-ever full-length by the low-key Buttrich, who's been quietly producing and performing in near-obscurity since the early 1990s. That's not to say he's done it without reward. Buttrich has remixed Tori Amos, released his original productions on Cocoon, Planet E, and Poker Flat, and launched the Desolat label with Loco Dice in 2007. *Crash Test* puts his versatility on full display. The LP contains 11 strong tracks, perfectly sequenced for optimal dancefloor mayhem or personal enjoyment in solitude. "Tripping in the 16th" starts the party rolling on a groovy French tech-house tip; "Back it Up" turns up the bass drum and blasts out a dark Detroit-Berlin dub-techno banger; and "I'm Going There One Day" takes its cue from electro-jazzists like Herbie Hancock or funky crossover modernists such as Carl Craig and Laurent Garnier. It just gets better and richer as it rolls along, offering a warm, deep, and sexy thrill ride from intro to outro, a complete soul-stirring package. *Walter Wasacz*



## BOOKA SHADE MORE!

Get Physical

Sometimes less really is more. Where Booka Shade's highly acclaimed second album, *Movements*, epitomized the duo's low-key, approachable beats and dappled, warm synth melodies, the German producers' fourth full-length intends to provide exactly what its name suggests: *More!* In this case, cohorts Arno Kammermeier and Walter Merziger mean more energy, more ornamentation, and more friends along for the ride. The resulting album, which has been 18 months in the making, is certainly more complicated, although not more sophisticated than previous work.

Hoping to capture the mood of their famously energetic live performances, the boys departed from their trademark clean studio electronic instrumentation and added textures of live drums, extra-thick layers of ambient synths, and quirky accents. The plucky, infectious instrumental "This is Not the Time" comes closest to Booka Shade's usual subtly cultivated melodic journey. Meanwhile, "The Door" opens with promising warping bass and a driving beat before running into a hodgepodge of spoken samples, ratcheted percussion, and new-wave synths that never really gel.

Adding to the distracting flurry of decoration, *More!* also features a handful of guest vocalists—a first on a Booka Shade album. Peculiar meandering female vocals set against marbled synths on the pretty "Regenerate" fall nicely into the song's overall balance. On the other hand, the vaguely Faithless-reminiscent "Divine" features spoken contributions from new-wave kings Yello, and Cheloni R. Jones' pop vocals combine with cheesy synths on "Bad Love," leaving the listener longing for Booka Shade's deceptively simple instrumental melodies of yore. *Lulu McAllister*

## CARIBOU SWIM

Merge

The ever-growing mass of electronics heard on "Niobe," the closing number from Caribou's last album, *Andorra*, could be retroactively interpreted as a transition from the summery psych-rock explorations of Dan Snaith's past to the synthesized indie-pop found on *Swim*, his fifth full-length. While the Canadian producer previously used electronics

and modern technologies to craft and adorn his intimate bedroom-born songs, his latest album pulls those sensibilities into the forefront—and with captivating and brilliant results.

"Odessa" opens *Swim*, and maintains a slight connection to Snaith's past efforts. Though the song is inherently funky in its rhythms and melodies, as if it were built solely for the dancefloor, the mysterious samples and lilting flute sounds woven into "Odessa"'s repetitious hook could've been lifted from *Andorra*'s "Desiree." From that point forward, however, everything has changed. Dubstep, UK funky, house, and wonky bass all weave their way into *Swim*'s tapestry. The brilliant instrumental workout of "Bowls" is rooted in deep bass, off-kilter percussion, and a staccato synth melody that comes and goes at its leisure. Other standouts, like "Leave House" and "Hannibal," take Caribou's psych- and garage-rock inclinations and warp them into vast electronic soundscapes that somehow double as catchy, danceable pop songs.

Much like Four Tet's recent switch in focus toward club-friendly sonics, Caribou's *Swim* leaps into fresh, uncharted territory for the producer, but nonetheless retains the artist's unmistakably inviting and lovable style. The change could prove divisive for some, but fans of soulful vocal melodies and eclectic instrumentation sized to fit an evolved pop format will call *Swim* a classic in Caribou's career. *Patric Fallon*



## JAHCOOZI

### BAREFOOT WANDERER

Bpitch Control

If the band-name pun doesn't tip you off as to Jahcoozi's, um, energy, singer Sasha Perera will not leave you in the dark for long. "Skankin' barefoot be a global movement," she coos on "Barefoot Dub," *Barefoot Wanderer*'s first track, "gotta find a place for a barefoot temple." You won't need the remaining 10 tracks to figure out that this temple's location is not far from Black Rock City.

Apart from their Modeselektory globs of party bass arranged by Robot Koch and Oren Gerlitz, this Berlin trio stands out on Ellen Allien's label for their self-aware, global eclecticism. The Sri Lankan Perera has been perhaps unfairly compared to M.I.A. A more accurate comparison might be made with Brazilian Girls' Sabina Sciubba, whose wordplay and upfront sensuality are clearly influences on the band's persona. The vibe's not quite right, though. Sonically rich, the songs still seem to struggle for reasons to exist, grasping at—surprise—lame puns to buoy limp jams like "Lost in the Bass" or empty preaching to the nonconformist choir on "Read the Books." Jahcoozi only connects with the help of Antipod Consortium member M. Sayyid on "Powerdown Blackout," which sells its silliness by owning up to it.

The problem with *Barefoot Wanderer* is that tries to re-start a party or bring back a conversation that was never a great idea in the first place—that Jahcoozi must be filled with both lentils and Veuve Clicquot. It's not that the singing and production style are heading in different directions, but that the former's predictability doesn't encourage us to listen more closely. Self-satisfaction isn't a good look with half-baked multiculturalism; there's Bumer appeal here, and little else. *Brandon Bussolini*

## JEREMY JAY

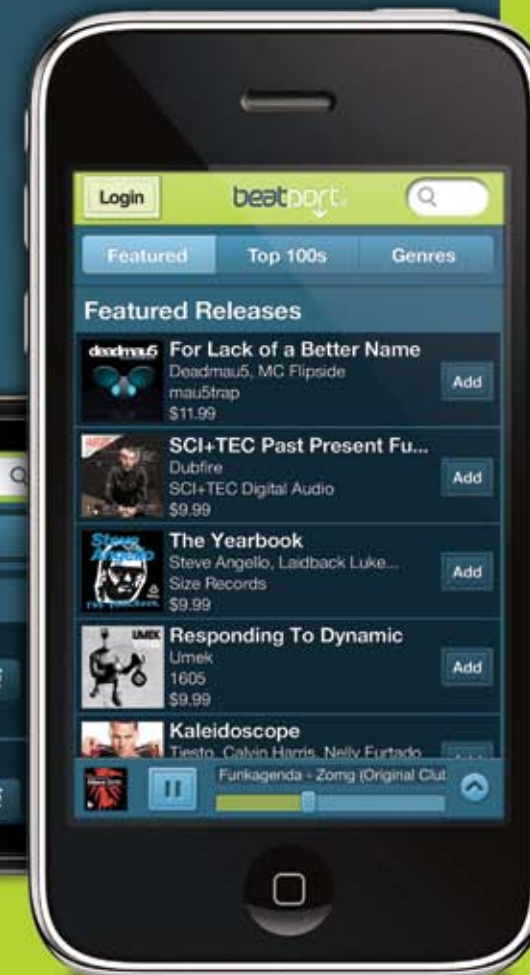
### SPLASH

K

The intriguing, undersung indie pop of Jeremy Jay's first few records feels wholly of another time and place. Sauntering somewhere between Del Shannon, The Field Mice, and The Left Banke, he ties together the wistful, romantic pop sounds of yesteryear for an alluring end result. In 2009, Jay ventured abroad from his hometown of Los Angeles to London and recorded *Splash*, his third LP and arguably his most satisfying artistic statement to date.



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NATIVE INSTRUMENTS

It starts off on a Pulp-like note with "As You Look Over the City," an unusually glam cut guided along by Jay's candid lyrics and brilliant bits of lead guitar from Jet Marshall, whose playing sets the largely Brit-pop tone of the whole record. It's a new and effective context for Jay's lyrics, giving the music the exciting edge that his raw, warbling voice has always had. Compared to last year's new-wave-influenced *Slow Dance*, the use of synths is more judicious and tasteful, subtly rendering "Just Dial My Number" and "Hologram Feather" more mysterious and seductive.

Jay's not a poet—his style of stringing together images can often feel clumsy and tedious—but he's more keen than ever before on eliminating abstraction and capturing personal moments with colorful details, and that works in his favor here: "This Is Our Time" finds him riding his BMX, guitar strapped to his back, headphones on, and feeling thoroughly exhilarated. Though lovelorn as ever, *Splash* is more fun than its predecessors, and these songs are simply his best yet. *Michael Harkin*

#### LCD SOUNDSYSTEM THIS IS HAPPENING

DFA-Virgin

Maybe it's a function of getting older, maybe it's because *This Is Happening* was partially recorded in sunny Los Angeles, but it appears that James Murphy has lost some of his affinity for the dancefloor. That's not to say that the third—and supposedly final—LCD Soundsystem album doesn't have its uptempo moments or occasionally pilfer from disco's rich sound palette. But it's telling that opener "Dance Yrself Clean" trundles along for more than three minutes before a kick drum is added to the mix; even then, it's not exactly a dance cut. DFA diehards will enjoy the futuristic robo-funk of "One Touch," while the stripped-down post-punk disco and witty lyricism of "Pow Pow" recalls "Losing My Edge," LCD's first single from 2002.

Yet the best moments on *This Is Happening* come when Murphy gets pensive and dives back into the emotive well that made 2007's *Sound of Silver* such a stellar album. The new record doesn't quite live up to its predecessor, but its middle third is especially strong—"All I Want" finds a melancholy Murphy repeating "All I want is your pity" over soaring melodies and Strokes-like guitars. "Change" is wistful electronic pop with synths reminiscent of Gary Numan, and album standout "Hit" is a nine-minute opus that transitions from twee synths to midtempo new-wave pop, complete with a guitar riff borrowed from The Cars. First single "Drunk Girls" also leans heavily on guitars, but no amount of Murphy's clever wordplay can alter the fact that the song is borderline annoying. Much better is "Somebody's Calling Me," a slow dirge that updates Iggy Pop's "Nightclubbing," and "What You Need," whose sparkling keys and agogo bell percussion cap the album in fine fashion. *Shawn Reynaldo*



#### JAMIE LIDELL COMPASS

Warp

Since breaking out as a retro-minded soul singer amid futuristic techno tunes, Jamie Lidell has struggled to reconcile musical identities. Is he the British Maxwell, doomed to slightly update R&B with minor innovations as he did on *Jim* two years ago, or the energized, knob-twiddling illegitimate spawn of Prince and Aphex Twin of his invigorating live performances? Lidell wields the force of his distinctive quaver on *Compass* to meld his many personas into one, emerging with a chronicle of romantic dislocation that tumbles seamlessly from simple, sharp balladry to chaotic, distorted blues.

It's easy to initially roll your eyes at the list of guests on *Compass*, with Beck and Feist headlining, but Lidell absorbs them and players like Grizzly Bear's Chris Taylor and R&B percussion vet James Gadson into an oddball crew providing the raw material that Lidell ultimately shapes into a new vision of midtempo electro-funk-rock. When "She Needs Me" threatens to soar off into faux-Luther Vandross territory, a rubbery funk bassline keeps it bound to Earth. Feist's and Nikka Costa's backup vocals cement "Enough's Enough" as a credibly sunny workout in a classic Motown vein. But it's the defiantly weird edges that make *Compass* cohere, like the distorted, looped vocals wiggling behind the piano-and-horn stomp of "The Ring," or the sneaky, icy shuffle of cheating-hearts tale "It's a Kiss." Lidell's no longer donning and ditching genre exercises like so many ironic t-shirts; he's the outside, unpredictable soul villain holding the compass. *Rob Geary*

#### ROSKA

##### RINSE PRESENTS ROSKA

Rinse

For all the ink devoted to the rise and seemingly endless mutations of UK funky, the genre is notably devoid of full-length albums. Granted, the lightning-quick pace of London bass music doesn't exactly lend itself to thoughtful, drawn-out masterworks, but other than Geeneus' tone-setting 2008 LP, *Volumes: One*, there has been a parade of virtually nothing but singles and EPs, even from the biggest names in the scene. One of those names has undoubtedly been Roska (a.k.a. Wayne Goodlitt), whose steady stream of drum-heavy production, not to mention his ubiquitous "Roska Roska Roska" drop, bridged the gap between bottle-service clubs and the underground and played a huge role in putting funky on the map.

Now he's released *Rinse Presents Roska*, and although it does include a few recycled tracks ("Hey Cutie," "Wonderful Day," and "Love 2 Nite," the latter two with vocalist Jamie George), most of the album is new material, and not all of it is proper funky. DJs will undoubtedly gravitate toward the potent strings and big-room percussion of "Time Stamp" and "Tomorrow Is Today," the infectious synth squelch of "Burn in Flames," and the whistles, stop-and-start beat, and oddball squawks of the already anthemic "Squark." But those are matched with the compellingly chilled-out "Energy" and "I Need Love," where respective guest vocalists Nikki and Aneesha lend the tracks a soulful garage feel, not to mention "Messages," whose clicks, pops, and chirping synths chart a course that's deeper than many funky artists are willing to go. *Shawn Reynaldo*

#### THE SIGHT BELOW

##### IT ALL FALLS APART

Ghostly International

Despite lulls in popularity, dub-techno has never really left us; after all, Echospace, Andy Stott, and Bvdub continue to release records full of the atmospheric, crackling beatscapes pioneered by Rhythm & Sound. But while Fluxion and Wolfgang Voigt are still drowning listeners in oceans of loop-based ambience, finding a producer who can combine the emotional resonance of Stars of the Lid with the techno prowess of a Kompakt record is a more difficult task, and one which illuminates what can be considered a gap in current electronic music. Fortunately, the low-profile Rafael Anton Irisarri (a.k.a. The Sight Below) fills this gap in a dazzlingly melancholy manner on his second full-length. With the help of Slowdive drummer/percussionist Simon Scott, Irisarri has crafted seven tracks that cover an astounding range of visceral sonic possibilities, from the bright guitar lines and comforting drones of "Fervent" to the steely techno chill of "Burn Me Out From the Inside." Perhaps the track most exemplary of The Sight Below's range, though, is the cover of Joy Division's "New Dawn Fades"—slow-motion percussion falls low in the mix behind faraway storms of guitar, watery cracklings, droning synth harmonies, and the thin, plaintive vocalizations of Jesy Fortino (a.k.a. Tiny Vipers). The effect is of a hurricane passing over an ocean, gathering heat and force while simultaneously cooling the waters below. *Thomas Rees*

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## BUBBLIN'



## DOC DANEEKA



Swansea, Wales

Another offering from the UK's fertile pool of post-garage producers, Doc Daneeka (a.k.a. Mial Watkins) originally sought to make drum & bass, but he began dabbling in trip-hop and eventually wound up producing highly percussive house music rich in tropical drums and syncopated rhythms. Daneeka's "Drums in the Deep" was a standout on Fabric's *Elevator Music* compilation, his remixes of Delphic, Norrit, and Sekta feat. Spoek Mathambo have received plenty of spins, and his first official EP is coming soon on PTN, a new sub-label of Ramp. He's also started up his own label, Ten Thousand Yen, which will deliver more of his own music alongside releases from Julio Bashmore and others.

[myspace.com/thealdodaneeka](http://myspace.com/thealdodaneeka)



## IRON CURTIS

Berlin, Germany

Like many house acts, Johannes Paluka's primary influences can be traced back to classic sounds of Detroit, but as Iron Curtis, this German producer puts his own stamp on the genre, stirring a real sense of soul into his subtle—but never minimal—brew of deep house and techno. Maybe it's because he grew up listening to his father's Motown records, although Paluka claims that his tastes have always been rather eclectic. Over the past year he's released a series of EPs on a number of labels, including high-quality outposts Mirau, Morris Audio, and Mule Electronic.

[myspace.com/ironcurtis](http://myspace.com/ironcurtis)



## BALAM ACAB

Ithaca, NY

18-year-old Alec Koone originally started Balam Acab a few years back as a noise/drone project, but got caught up in other musical gigs and things like, you know, high school. It was only last winter that Koone, now a music student at Ithaca College, revived the moniker after crafting new songs that married elements of dubstep and UK bass music with the washed-out gloom-and-doom of acts like Salem and Grouper. Although the haunting tones and ghostly vocals of Balam Acab can currently only be enjoyed via MySpace and various blog posts, an EP is coming on Tri Angle Records, as are several of his remixes.

[myspace.com/thebamacab](http://myspace.com/thebamacab)

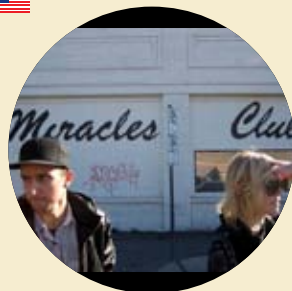


## SPACE DIMENSION CONTROLLER

Belfast, Northern Ireland

Space Dimension Controller claims to be a resident of Mikrosector-50, the new home of the human race after Earth was declared dead—due to alien invasion—in 2259. Apparently he began making spacey, Balearic tunes to combat the boredom of space travel and later miraculously traveled back through time to our present. The story is certainly wild, but 19-year-old Jack Hamill has the talent to back it up. He's remixed Anthony Shakir and counts Kyle Hall as a fan of the analog synth sounds and pulsing techno beats that populate last year's *The Love Quadrant* EP and his recent *Journey to the Core of the Unknown Sphere* EP. A new single is slated for release on K&S this summer.

[myspace.com/spacedimensioncontroller](http://myspace.com/spacedimensioncontroller)



## THE MIRACLES CLUB

Portland, OR

Honey Owens is no music newbie—she's spent years in genre-bending outfits like Jackie-O Motherfucker, Nudge, and more recently with ambient/experimental solo project Valet. But The Miracles Club marks a new direction for Owens: house music. Teaming up with drum-machine-obsessed painter/artist Rafael Fauria, Owens is making uplifting dance music inspired by classic Chicago sounds. The duo has even enlisted the services of performance artist/dancer Ryan Boyle for their live show. The group's debut EP, *Light of Love*, was released earlier this year on their own Ecstasy imprint.

[myspace.com/themiraclesclub](http://myspace.com/themiraclesclub)

## GUEST REVIEWS: JAN JELINEK



Jan Jelinek's approaches to sound range as widely as his monikers, from the deep, housey clicks and cuts of his Farben project to the conceptual analog-synth meanderings under the Ursula Bogner alias. Also a collaborator *par excellence*, Jelinek has worked on audio-visual projects with everyone from video artist Karl Kliem to German author and theorist Thomas Meinecke. His latest project is an album created with Japanese vibraphonist Masayoshi Fujita, released on Jelinek's own Faitiche label. Filled with ambient space and shimmering whirs from Jelinek and lush loops from Fujita, *Bird, Lake, Objects* is a piece of improvised music that once again showcases Jelinek's dynamism. Here, the Berlin-based composer talks about his favorite sounds of the moment, and, as expected, eclecticism guides his choices. *Thomas Rees* [janjelinek.com](http://janjelinek.com)

DENSELAND  
CHUNK

Mosz

Denseland is a project by David Moss, Hannes Strobl, and my bandmate Hanno Leichtmann—so don't expect a bad review. But I have never previously been a fan of David Moss' way of crooning. It's usually too exalted, small-scaled, artificial, and excessive. *Chunk* is more convincing—in its best moments it sounds like an aged James Chance record. Fantastic!

WOLFGANG MÜLLER  
SÉANCE VOCIBUS AVIUM

Fang Bomb

Some might know Müller from his past project, Die Tödliche Doris, which dithered between music, conceptual art, and irony. For this project, he invited a bunch of musicians to recreate the birdcalls of species which have been eradicated by humans. Actual descriptions of those calls are very rare, so some were recreated by consulting a psychic medium.

XYRAMAT  
LACK KLEBT AUF SCHWARZGELD NICHT

M.M

M.M is a small 7" label focused on Plunderphonics. Unfortunately, every release is limited to only 100 copies. Both tracks feel very "techno," or better, "industrial," even if it is obviously not sequenced music. Xyramat is for people who like techno made by guitar pedals.

STUART KEITH  
BIRDS OF THE AFRICAN RAIN FORESTS

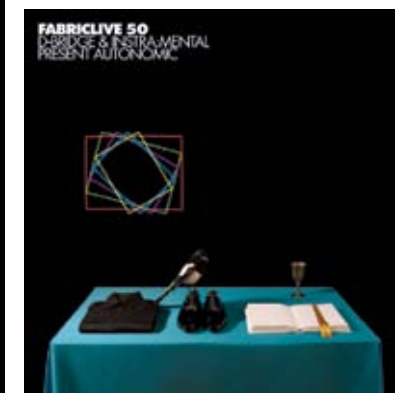
Sounds of Nature

More animal sounds, but this time not recreated by humans. These field recordings were made in 1962 in Tanzania, Kenya, and Uganda. The album title is a bit irritating, because Keith presents also bats, chimpanzees, and rather unspecified events like the "Sokoke Forest evening chorus." My favorite is the call of the Amani Sunbird, which is conspicuously similar to a standard Italo-house hook line.



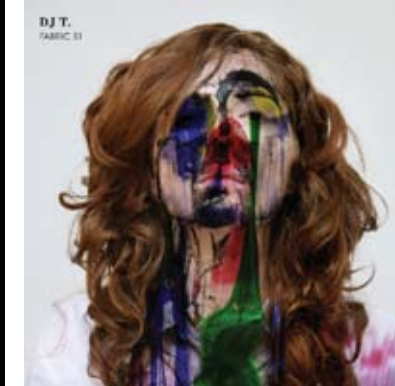
## Martyn - Out Now

As an artist whose music has always defied classification, it comes as no surprise that Martyn's fabric mix stomps over the notion of genre; fabric 50 is a thrilling, unpredictable portrait of today's all-embracing and cross-pollinating music scenes. Powered only by the common link of bass culture, Martyn fuses the deep impact of 2562 and Kode 9, the funky step of Roska and Uncle Bakongo, wildly imaginative creations from Hudson Mohawke and Joy Orbison, and the cerebral trip of Werk Discs' Actress. Also glittered with his own 3024 label creations, this is a definitive snapshot of any pulsating, incandescent dancefloor taken over by the Martyn sound.



## Autonomic - Out Now

Autonomic, the combination of Bad Company's most musically accomplished member, dBridge, and the single most exciting production outfit to come out of the D&B scene in a decade, Instrumental, have redefined the notion of drum & bass with this exploratory mix. FABRICLIVE 50 represents their collaborative productions, as well as the work of select producers (many of whom have delivered tailor-made tracks for the CD, from ASC to Skream to Actress to Scuba to Genotype) who are creating music for dBridge & Instrumental that completely redefines what the world knows as Drum & Bass. A sound so inventive, it defies conventional genre confines – for now, it can only be called the "Autonomic sound."



## DJ T. - 4th May

'fabric 51: DJ T. serves as an unforgettable introduction to one of his astonishing DJ sets, a lively adventure full of sharp twists and unexpected turns. Featuring the off-beat spontaneity of JOP, the Latin infused bounce of Matias Aguayo, the percussive retreats of Bodycode - and plenty of hidden gems in-between - fabric 51 is a joy of a listen, a daydream-fuelling hideaway where each track is crammed with as many soul-fuelled moments and intricate charms as the next.



## Duke Dumont - 18th May

The Duke Dumont's burning appetite for good music, first and foremost, is conveyed through a rather surprising collection of sonic treasures on his FABRICLIVE 51 mix. Stripped down to a slim-line 13 tracks, it takes in the acid-tinged techno of Saturn V on Spectral Sound, the Berghain warehouse throb of Scuba, the melodic lilt of Bodycode, the deep 2-step swing of Floating Points and the epic swell of Idioma's closer. A mix that takes listeners right back to the centre of fabric's pitch black 4am dancefloor.

Forthcoming: Optimo (Espacio), Zero T, Surgeon, Drop The Lime, Damian Lazarus and David Rodigan.



## IN THE STUDIO: HOLY FUCK

WITH THEIR NEW RECORD, THE TORONTO FOUR-PIECE WALKS THE TIGHTROPE BETWEEN LIVE ENERGY AND STUDIO PERFECTIONISM.

Holy Fuck has spent the last six years developing a sublime brand of post-post-rock that owes as much to classic Krautrock and guitar nerdery as it does minimal techno. The Toronto-based quartet, led by Brian Borchardt and Graham Walsh, built their sound on thoughtful improvisation, a wide palette of found instruments, and an untouchable live show. Recording their third long-player, *Latin*, in a barn in rural Ontario, Holy Fuck managed to capture their live, skronky intensity while retaining their math-rocky attention to detail. We caught up with Walsh to get the lowdown on how he distilled the band's inimitable vibe.

**XLR8R: How did the barn have an affect on the recording process?**

Graham Walsh: We're very drawn to rural environments. I find that it's just more relaxing to get out of the city, where there's a lot of energy going on. That can be good, too, and that's where a lot of our friends are, but sometimes I like to lessen the distractions and come out into nature. For the barn, we just booked four- or five-day chunks here and there. We'd go to the grocery store and buy supplies and then just stay in this barn, and just totally immerse ourselves.

**As a band, Holy Fuck is known for its intense live show. Do you consider that when you're in the studio?**

With *Latin*, we have more of our live energy than we do on our past record. We did things this time where we played everything live in the studio and tried to get a take out of it. There is definitely something to be said about a band playing all together at once. Generally, I find that the energy, the vibe, and the excitement in the group is much greater. That's an optimal situation. With this record, we did have a solid drummer and bass player that played on all of the songs, whereas on previous records we had a rotating cast. That added a uniformity to the songs.

**But you're obviously not against overdubs.**

That's the thing, it's a balance. We recorded everything all together, all four of us. Then we were bringing the tracks back to Toronto and adding little details, fine carvings. There are certain things on the record that we wanted to pay a lot of attention to in terms of keyboard parts. You need a lot of focus on your own to hone in on those things. We were trying to meld the best of both of those worlds where we were trying to lay down as much as we could live off the floor and then adding those details afterward.

**Is there an essential piece of equipment that you use for recording?**

It is essential to get a good-sounding room. You don't have to fix as much. It's funny, you can get away with more if you're recording in a really good-sounding room. I've done

recordings in my basement at home and you have to wrestle with the sounds, but if you use a good-sounding room, most of your job is being taken care of. A room isn't necessarily a piece of equipment, but I would say it's definitely important.

**What sort of set-ups did you use in your home studios?**

Once Brian and I brought the bed tracks home, we were using our own Pro Tools LE systems, and running certain tracks through our pedal board set-ups. They contain various guitar EFX pedals (Boss, Moogerfooger, Frostwave, Lovetone, Diamond, DigiTech), and either a Mackie 1604 or an Alesis Multimix portable mixer for generating feedback loops, and overdriving to get a really awesome distortion.

**Do you prefer to work with digital or analog gear?**

There's the whole Pro Tools-vs.-tape argument, and so far we've done everything with Pro Tools, which has become very invaluable to us. My experience with tape isn't as extensive. My argument is that either one is a tool and it all depends on how you use it. You could hand somebody a tape machine and they could make a crappy-sounding record. You're not automatically going to run your stuff through a tape machine and it will sound perfectly amazing. There are tons of great records made on Pro Tools and it's amazing tool. You can track down the rabbit hole in Pro Tools, for sure, and that's a negative side to it, and tape sounds good and there's limitations to tape which are wonderful but it can also be a pain in the ass, too.

**It seems like you're looking for the right balance between live and studio as well as digital and analog.**

I think that's kind of a metaphor for how we create and make our art. It's a giant balancing act, and an alchemy between certain elements. We're combining certain things and seeing how they act and react together.

*Latin* is out now on Young Turks/XL.  
[holyfuckmusic.com](http://holyfuckmusic.com)

## ARTIST TIPS: CHRISTIAN PROMMER

Christian Prommer is not one to think within the traditional rubric of what is considered electronic dance music; after all, the Munich-based percussionist and producer is best-known for his *Drum Lesson Vol. 1* release, which reworked classic techno and electronic tracks into jazz instrumentals and sent his profile through the roof. Now in the midst of releasing *Drumlesson Zwei* (1K7), Prommer is as ecstatic about organic, non-electronic music as his own techno productions, though the inspiration for both is still his grounding in Detroit techno and the European synth workouts that gave rise to so many early techno producers' ideas. Here, he takes us through the process of how he uses Apple Logic 9 as a recording tool. *Thomas Rees*

### Levels

Keep your levels down. No need for hot channels or loud recordings. All the plugs sound better when driven not so hot. I try to keep the channel fader at -10db. I even put the gain plug as the first plug in the insert and put it at -10db. Within 24bit it is not a big deal, but when you add the channels up to 16 or more, you will hear the difference for sure. Better imaging and big low end. And low end is what we want, right? It worked great on the track "Sueno Latino," which was mixed in the box with Logic.

### Sample Replacement

A new feature in Logic 9 is the sample replacement or addition to a drum track. I used this on a few tracks like "Sueno Latino" and "Acid Eiffel." You get the original unquantized hits of a drum track played by an EXS sample—good when the drummer has the right feel but the kick sound is not strong enough. I always put the velocity on a constant level and put the new sample low under an organic one. I really love the EXS preset kicks for this. Sometimes I layer two or three.

### Sidechain Compression

An old trick but it still works wonders in a mix, especially when you move the kick that you use to trigger the comp (and that is muted) around an eighth note. I love this feature for all the percussion sounds... congas, shakers, and the like. It provides some room for more radical sound treatment like the distortion, bit-crushing, and filtering of the compressed sounds. I used it a lot on "Groove la Chord" and "Jaguar."

### Fader Groups

I use fader groups in multi-track recordings to group drum and bass tracks together and give them a general groove treatment. Make a fader group and select your faders, and check the Phase Locked Audio button. Then put the Flex algorithm on Rhythm and let the program do its math. Then select all the tracks of the group and quantize them with a fixed 16B setting. Lower the Q amount in the extended quantize parameters box to 0%. Start the playback and raise the percentage up to where you change the groove enough to get a locked vibe. Usually,

60% is more than enough. It is a great feature to get long tracks that are out of sync to swing tighter.

### Trust Your Instincts

...and your ears. What looks wrong and bad but sounds inspired and interesting is way better than the other way around. I spent a lot of time getting drums right and fixing stuff to the grid just to go back to the beginning of the recording and fall in love with the "interesting" interpretation of the performance. Sometimes it's good to remember the art aspect of what we do within all the science and technology.

[myspace.com/christianprommer](http://myspace.com/christianprommer)

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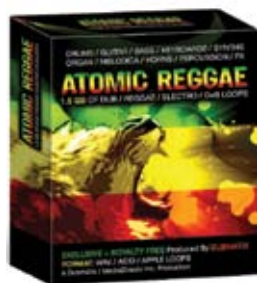
(ROCKSTAR; PS3, XBOX 360)



2004's *Red Dead Revolver* re-energized many gamers' interest in the Old West, but few games since have succeeded in capturing the days of steam engines and murderous cattle thieves in any meaningful way—until now. *Red Dead Redemption*, the sequel to *Red Dead Revolver*, follows a former outlaw who has been appointed as a peacemaker during the final days of the American Frontier in the early 1900s. With open-ended gameplay à la *Grand Theft Auto*, you can choose to uphold the law, foiling stagecoach robberies and rounding up ne'er-do-wells, or you can choose to be a little more liberal in your interpretation of "justice" by simply blasting away at anyone that looks at you crooked. But, like in *GTA*, all of your actions have consequences, so expect to come up against heavy resistance should you decide to get all Jesse James (the murderer, not the skank-banger) on the locals. However, as you traverse the epic vistas and perilous badlands, you quickly discover that *Redemption* is not just a run-and-gun homage to the films of Sergio Leone, but is as deep and expansive an experience, if not more so, than some the best Westerns ever produced by Hollywood. *Ryan Rayhill*

## Dubmatix Atomic Reggae Loops Vol I

MSRP: \$79.95; [dubmatix.com](http://dubmatix.com)



Production packages for reggae studio heads are few and far between, as companies instead focus their sets on popular genres such as hip-hop, electro, techno, or pop. Sonic Reality and Uberschall have a few reggae-themed offerings, but in general they sound like adaptations of their electronic and rock packages. Enter Atomic Reggae, a loops collection recorded by Canadian band Dubmatix using live vintage instruments. The set contains 1.5 GB of Acidized and AIFF loops, including live and synth bass, guitar, horns, melodica, and organ, plus one-drop and steppers drum loops. The sounds are processed with reggae-centric analog effects like tape delay, spring reverb, and phasers for a gritty Kingston studio feel. The loops are generally high quality and useful, but a lack of individual hits and mediocre FX was disappointing. New reggae producers or those needing a quick loops injection will be satisfied, but veteran dub scientists should invest in more gear or VSTs. *Tomas Palermo*

## V-Moda Remix Remote earphones

MSRP: \$99.99; [v-moda.com](http://v-moda.com)



It seems the biggest complaint against in-ear headphones is the eventual discomfort one expects when wearing them for too long. Enter V-Moda's Remix Remote: a set of high-def headphones that feel as inconspicuous as they deliver pristine sound. The company's patented BLISS (Bass Level Isolating Soft Silicone) technology provides comfort and sound isolation while enabling the deep low-end that so many earphones lack. Along with every amenity and add-on a pair of ear buds could possibly come with, the Remix Remote set features reinforced Kevlar(?) cables, a 24k gold-plated plug, and a built-in remote that controls volume, plays, and pauses your music, and doubles as a microphone—solid for iPhone use. It all sums up to a comfortable, state-of-the-art set of headphones well worth its price.

*Patric Fallon*

## NATIVE INSTRUMENTS GUITAR RIG 4 PRO KONTROL

MSRP: \$449 W/HARDWARE, \$199 SOFTWARE ONLY; [NATIVE-INSTRUMENTS.COM](http://NATIVE-INSTRUMENTS.COM)



Offering an alternative to roadie hernias, this update puts realistically modeled guitar/bass set-ups in your laptop—complete with 25 selectable cabinets plus 15 pairable heads, 48 true stereo rack effects, and even vintage mics. But nothing replaces the satisfying physicality of a pedal's spring-loaded cha-chunk! That's why the industrial-strength Rig Kontrol floorboard offers eight triggers and an expression pedal mappable to any MIDI-controlled program. Assign the 192/24 USB interface with its native software for customization down to an amp's power supply, voltage, tube aging, and more. Sporting a glossier GUI, Guitar Rig features enhanced preset tagging/saving/sorting, adding to a premiere reamping tool. Key new additions include the Control Room module, where fader-based assigning/aligning of speaker/mic/preamp chains crafts sweet analog saturation as signature patches. Splitting signal paths by crossover point generates creative frequency mayhem. And Master FX adds overreaching, mood-tweaking coloration. Far from being limited to guitarists, this architecture is good for anyone using tone as an instrument. *Tony Ware*

## Lost Planet 2

(Capcom; PS3, XBOX 360)

Ten years after the events of the original *Lost Planet*, *Lost Planet 2* finds the distant and once-icy world of EDN III transformed into a planet of thick jungles and arid deserts, as efforts to terraform it into a post-Earth sanctuary have proven successful. However, the native species, the highly organized race of giant insectoid creatures known as the Akrid, still doesn't welcome its new humanoid overlords, and, with increased numbers from the first game, they do everything possible to stop humans from ruling the planet. Taking on the role of various footsoldiers, each with a different investment in their new home, players team up to take on the big bugs with all manner of heavy firepower and robotic suits to pound them into a gooey pulp. *Ryan Rayhill*



## Super Mario Galaxy 2

(Nintendo; Wii)

Everyone's favorite mushroom-obsessed, go-kart-riding, planet-hopping plumber bounds relentlessly back into your life (hopefully without the use of LSD) this month with the release of *Super Mario Galaxy 2*. While much of what made *Super Mario Galaxy* a quintessential *Mario* experience remains intact, the sequel infuses a healthy dose of planetoid-boring drills as well as Yoshi, the sticky-tongued dinosaur first introduced in 1991, as you hop from galaxy to galaxy in search of bits of stardust. As is standard with *Mario* games, it's best to just accept that this is the most fun you will have on the Wii this year and not ask why a little Italian guy would or could do such things. *RR*

## LIVID BLOCK MIDI CONTROLLER

MSRP: \$425; LIVIDINSTRUMENTS.COM



Controlling Live and Max/MSP just got really sleek. Livid Instruments' Block MIDI controller might be one of the most streamlined control surfaces yet to be released. Its minimal design and subtle color scheme (think monome) perfectly compliment its 64 assignable clip buttons, eight knobs, seven function buttons, and two faders that stand as the core of the controller's versatility. Compatibility with any MIDI-supporting software and OS, an easy plug-and-play USB interface, access to Livid's open-source software, and lovingly handcrafted wood-aluminum design help lift this portable piece of hardware above its competitors. At first glance, Block may seem like just a lite version of Livid's trademark Ohm series, but sometimes with MIDI controllers, as with the music they control, less is more. *Patric Fallon*

## Arturia Jupiter-8 V2 software synth

MSRP: \$249; [arturia.com](http://arturia.com)



Looking to get the classic Roland synth sound, but short on money and studio space? The soft-synth masters over at Arturia have just the thing. Jupiter-8 V2 is exactly what its title implies: a virtual incarnation of one the most celebrated early synths, Roland's Jupiter-8. This bit of software offers the same soundbank of the original synthesizer, along with some exclusive extra features and Arturia's True Analog Emulation technology thrown in for that extra warmth, but with the ease and flexibility of a computer plug-in. Whether you're seasoned synth veteran or new to the keyboard game, the Jupiter-8 V2 is sure to fit nicely into your ever-growing arsenal of virtual noise-making modules. *PF*



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## Green Day: Rock Band

(EA; PS3, XBOX 360, Wii)

While the virtual-band craze may have slowed down a bit, rabid fans of pop-punk impresarios Green Day will likely still manage to make *Green Day: Rock Band* a huge hit. Considering that the only other band to get their own *Rock Band* title thus far is The Beatles, the Bay Area-born trio should rest assured that they are in good company. But unlike the Beatles game, Green Day will be making their foray into the genre a little more user-friendly as all the tracks in the game will be able to be exported into your old *Rock Band* files and you won't have to purchase any new room-cluttering drums or guitars to fully enjoy it. So remember kids, when masturbation has lost its fun, play *Green Day: Rock Band!* *RR*



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**ModNation Racers**  
(Sony; PS3, PSP)



Much like *LittleBigPlanet* before it, kart-racing title *ModNation Racers* bases much of its appeal on user-generated content to constantly infuse new tracks, vehicles, and characters into its repertoire. With an ever-evolving cast of characters, ranging from outright cute to downright disturbing, and weapons like lightning and sonic booms at your disposal, *ModNation Racers* looks to improve markedly on the nearly flawless groundwork laid out by *Mario Kart* so many years ago. *RR*

**Metal Gear Solid: Peace Walker**  
(Konami; PSP)



Snake returns to the small screen with *Metal Gear Solid: Peace Walker* in an attempt to quell a 1974 Costa Rican insurrection devised by a mysterious force—naturally, of unknown origin—with his team of highly specialized mercenaries. *Intriga internacional!* Relying heavily on co-operative WiFi play, *Peace Walker* allows for two players to collaborate throughout various missions and up to four players can work together to take out especially difficult boss characters. Featuring the requisite array of heavy artillery, stealth, and plenty of cardboard boxes, *Peace Walker* is perhaps the best-looking PSP title ever and is certainly the most compelling reason to dust off the handheld this year. *RR*

**Alan Wake**  
(Microsoft; XBOX 360)

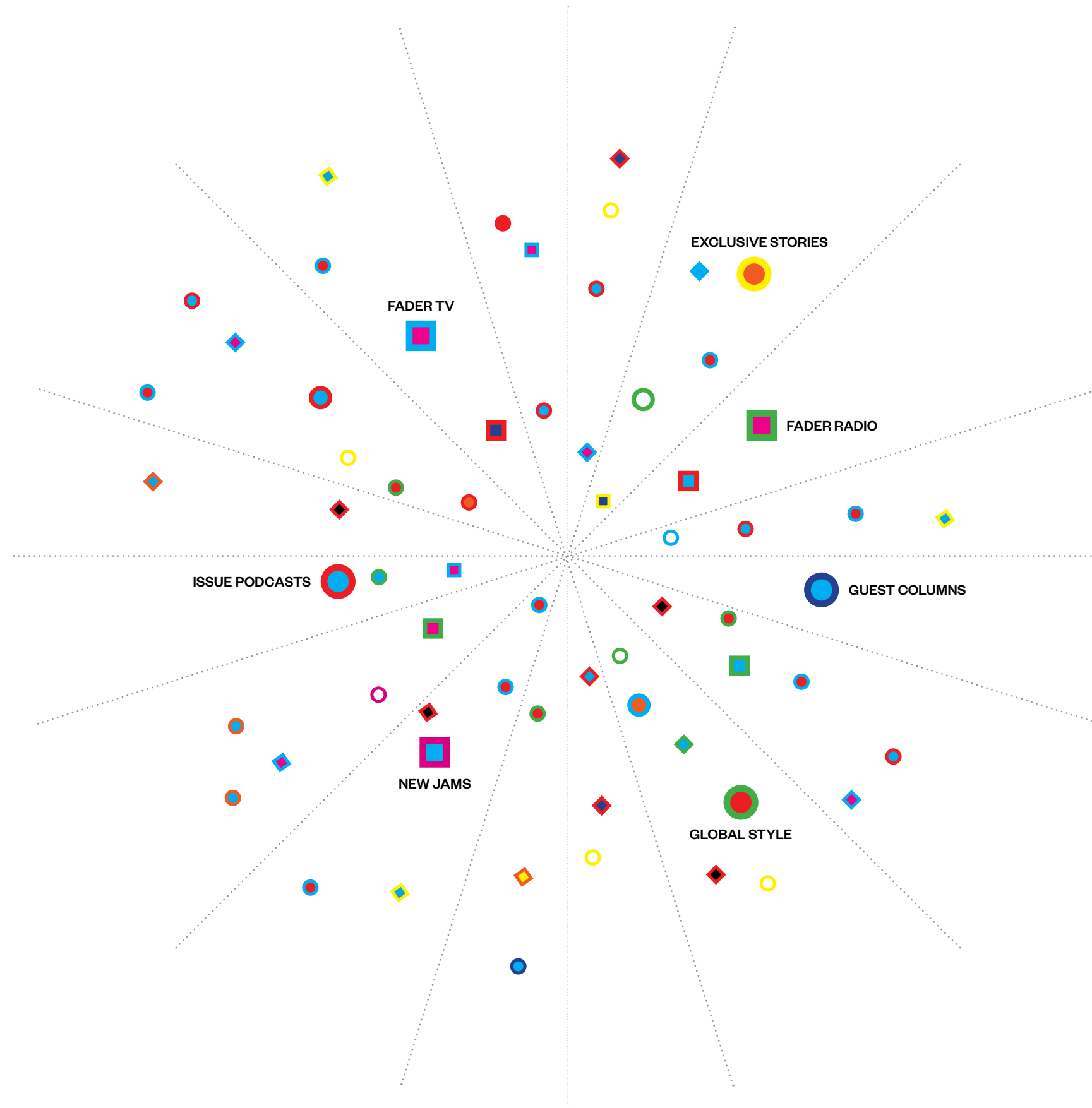


As a horror novelist whose creative output has hit a two-year dry spell, *Alan Wake* follows the titular protagonist as he and his wife move to the Washington wilderness in an effort to kick-start his creative juices. For some reason, this also seems to kick-start an increase in paranormal activity resulting in his wife's abduction as the pages of a novel he has no memory of penning begin to materialize in rain-soaked woods of the Pacific Northwest. Like *Twin Peaks* meets Stephen King, *Alan Wake* puts enough psycho in this psychological thriller to ensure that it won't soon be forgotten. *RR*

**PRINCE OF PERSIA:  
THE FORGOTTEN SANDS**

(UBISOFT; PS3, XBOX 360, WII, PSP)

With the impending release of the Jake Gyllenhaal sweaty-chest-a-thon based on the 2003 videogame masterwork, *Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time*, drawing near, *Prince of Persia: The Forgotten Sands* lands this month in an attempt to connect fans of the film with the glory of that classic. Taking place shortly after the events of *Sands of Time*, *Forgotten Sands* sees the Prince pay his regal brother a visit only to find his sibling's own kingdom under siege from a rival nation's colossal army. Once again, the time-twisting abilities of the *Sands of Time* must be used to put an end to the blockade, however, with less than ideal results this time around. While few of the *PoP* titles have lived up to the acclaim of *Sand of Time*, *Forgotten Sands* gets everything from the wall-jumping, swordplay, and time-bending just about right, convincingly restoring both the once-dwindling fun and charm to the series. *RR*



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# THOMAS FEHLMANN

Calling Thomas Fehlmann anything but a legend would be a gross misstep. The veteran ambient techno producer has been releasing music since the early '80s—an era verging on "vintage"—on a varied list of respectable labels, both solo and with Alex Paterson as The Orb. Now in his 50s, Fehlmann recently embarked on a new endeavor: composing the soundtrack to German reality TV show *24H Berlin*. From those sessions, Fehlmann's latest album, *Gute Luft*, was born. We snagged the painfully serious techno progenitor for a chance to e-chat about his first concert, what song people should remember him for, and why he'd like Brangelina with him on a desert island. *Patric Fallon*

## What sounds do you hear while you're answering these questions?

The fridge, passing cars, a few raindrops, the rumble of the city in the distance, and the scratching of my ears on my hoodie.

## What are the earliest bands you remember listening to as a child?

I only knew The Beatles for a good while. Then I liked The Mothers of Invention and Traffic. Later, Led Zeppelin. That was also my first-ever concert. Memorable!

## What were your hobbies as a kid growing up in Zürich?

Exploring the nearby woods, playing guitar, collecting records, copying Picasso paintings.

## Any embarrassing moments from performing live?

The sudden failure of the power supply in front of approximately 6,000 people at the Benicassim Festival was pretty embarrassing.

## It's a few hours before you go on at a massive festival. What are you doing before you go on stage?

[Taking] a power nap.

## What's the best meal to eat the morning after a night of heavy drinking?

Porridge with fruit, nuts, and honey.

## Describe your music in three words.

Sexy ear candy.

## Is it odd being surrounded by kids half your age when you perform?



Odd? What are you talking about? I didn't notice that yet. :) It's another beautiful aspect of music to make those clichés redundant.

## You're secluded on a desert island. Name five albums, four movies, three books, two people, and one beverage that you take with you.

Albums: Miles Davis' *Bitches Brew*, Brian Eno's *Another Green World*, Wolfgang Voigt's *GAS*, The Mothers of Invention's *Uncle Meat*, and Theo Parrish's *Sound Signature*.

Movies: Federico Fellini for the fantasy, François Truffaut for the heart, Quentin Tarantino for the fun, and David Lynch for the mystery.

Books: David Foster Wallace's *Infinite Jest*, G.I. Gurdjieff's *All and Everything*, and Robert Musil's *The Man Without Qualities*.

People: Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie, because they would come with a helicopter.

Beverage: Sake (provided water would already be there).

## You're asked to do a Kraftwerk tribute album. What songs would you cover with The Orb?

## What songs would you do under your solo moniker?

I don't like the idea as such, but if I had to, I would choose material from the first three albums that still have not been re-released. With The Orb, I'd do "Kling Klang." On my own, I'd do "Tanzmusik" from *Ralf und Florian*.

## If you could've spent your life doing anything outside of music, what would it have been?

I guess I would be working in visual arts. That's where I initially came from.

## If you could choose one of your songs to live on as your legacy, which would it be?

"Du Fehlst Mir" from *Vision of Blah*.

## How did the soundtrack for the *24H Berlin* TV show become *Gute Luft*?

With a massive pair of digital scissors and lots of green tea.

*Gute Luft* is out now on Kompakt. [flowing.de](http://flowing.de)

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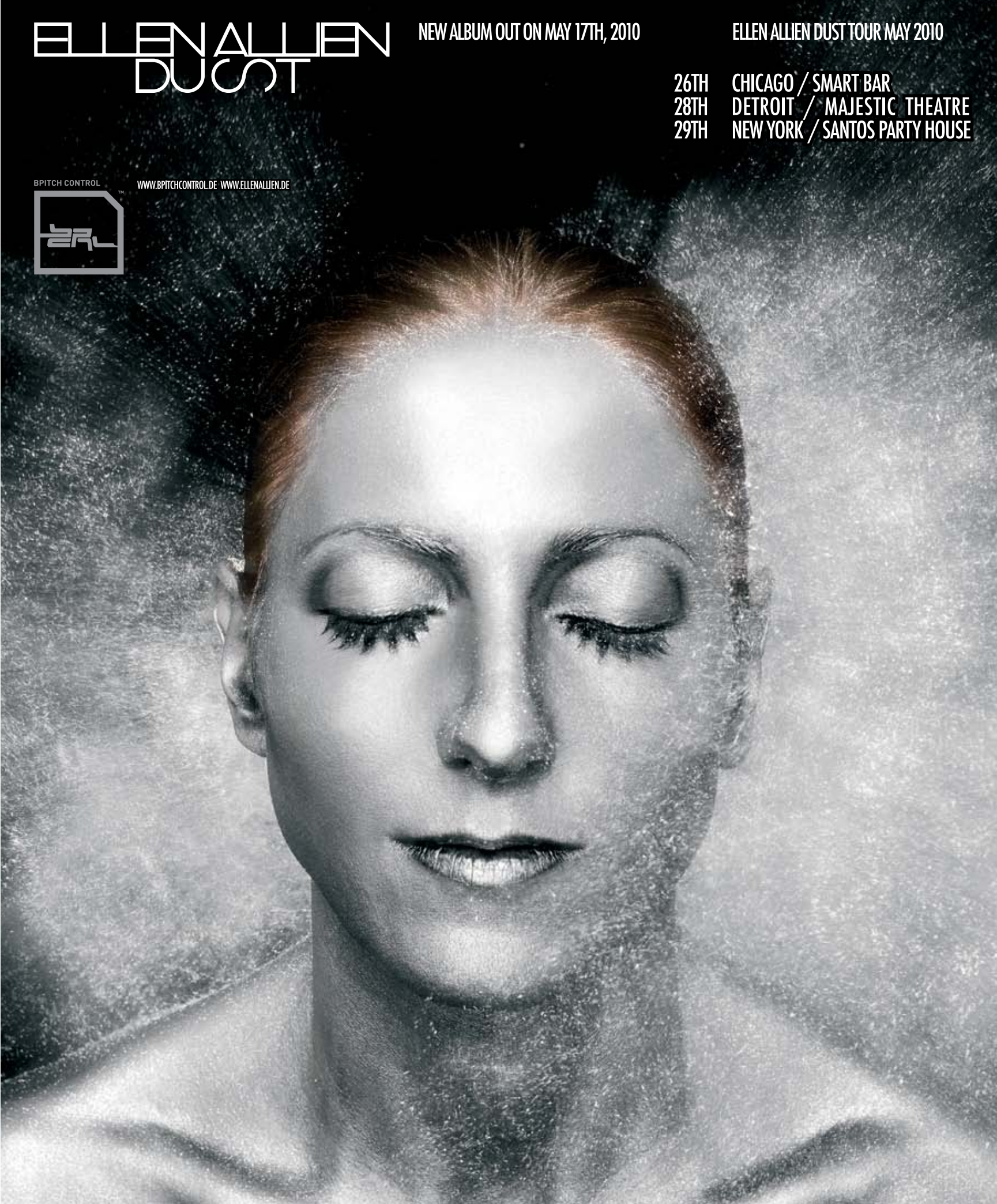
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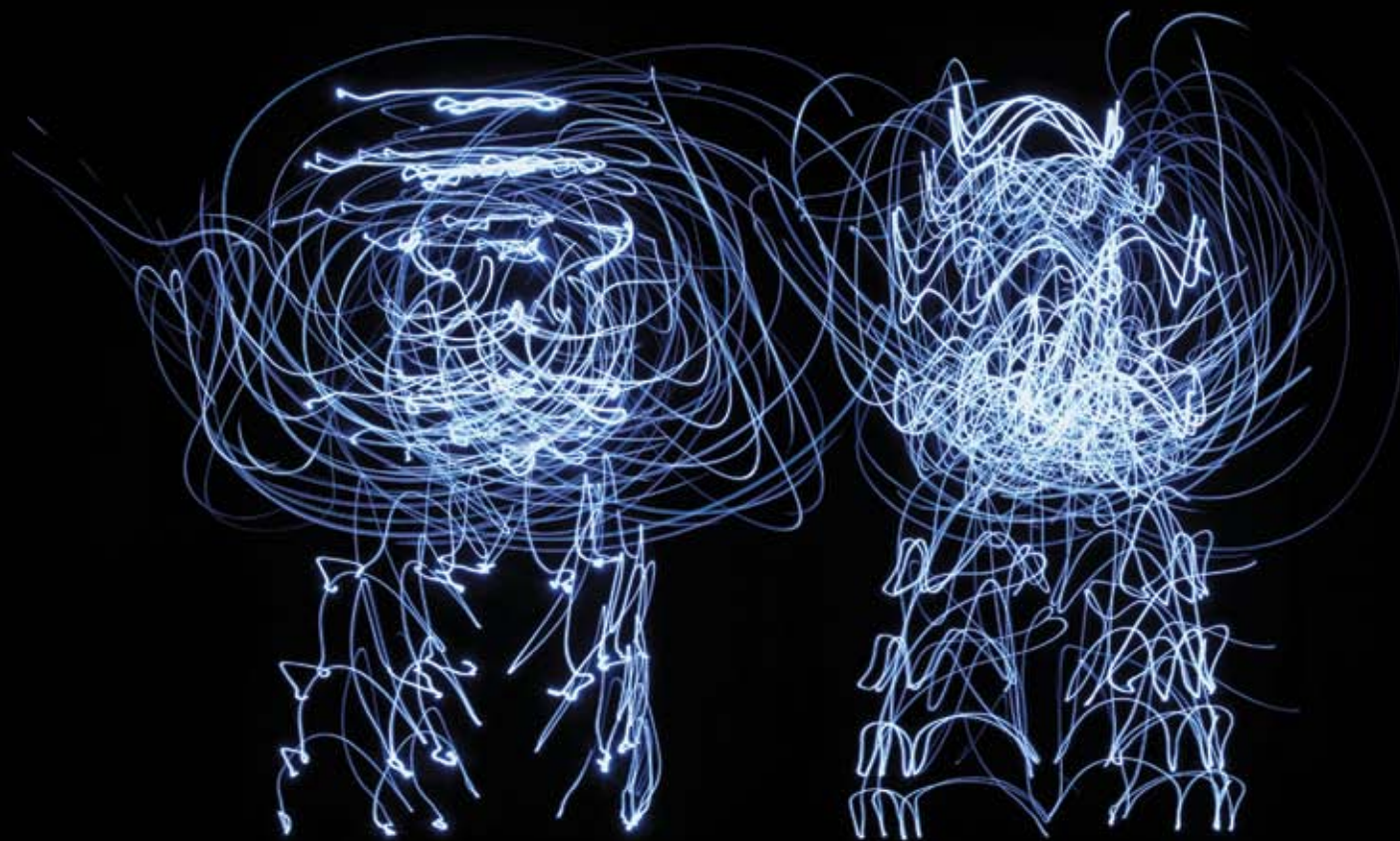
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